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The Theatre.

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The Theatre.

FEBRUARY 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

COMPETENT DRAMATISTS.



HE spirited answer made by Mr. F. C. Burnand to the assertion of a contemporary that we are in want of competent dramatic authors, is a pleasant contribution to a discussion which is often renewed without any prospect of approaching determination. His answer is moreover of interest because, besides being, as might be expected, both witty and amusing, it suggests an argument which

has not hitherto been cogently put forward by those who hold with Mr. Burnand that, be the deficiencies of our stage what they may, they are not due to our playwrights. But, before we refer more fully to Mr. Burnand's letter itself, it may elucidate matters if we explain the circumstances under which it was written. A writer, then, in the *Daily Telegraph*, in summarizing the theatrical doings of Christmas-time, took occasion to make a deduction which Mr. Burnand thus describes: "Because an adaptation of a French piece, scarce thirty nights old, is still running at the Haymarket, because the manager of the Princess's had not calculated upon the failure of *No. 20*, and provided himself with a new piece, because Mr. Irving, having engaged Miss Ellen Terry for Ophelia, opens the Lyceum with *Hamlet*, because Mr. Bancroft chooses to fill up an interval between being off with the old love and on with the new by reproducing *Caste*, and because Mr. Hare thinks that what has done well once will do well again, and to give himself more time to look

about, revives *A Scrap of Paper* and *A Quiet Rubber*, both adaptations from the French—therefore there are no competent dramatic authors!” That, of course, is only Mr. Burnand’s humorous way of putting things, but it may be accepted as a fair example of the conclusions often arrived at after a survey of our theatres and their typical programmes. The casual, or, it may be, the critical, observer looks round him and sees adaptations and revivals everywhere, and adaptations of sheer rubbish and of pieces perfectly unsympathetic to English audiences, as well as of plays worthy to be placed on every civilized stage; revivals not only of standard classical works, but of dramas which might fairly have been buried where they seemed to die years ago. He concludes, somewhat hastily perhaps, but still not unnaturally, that the reason why “new and original” plays are so rarely provided must be connected with their scarcity, and their scarcity he attributes to a lack of fertility, of creative power, and of energy on the part of the playwrights. Then it is that Mr. Burnand’s good-humoured, albeit contemptuous laugh comes in. He pictures Mr. H. J. Byron’s face, Mr. W. S. Gilbert’s exclamation, and the variously displayed indignation of Messrs. F. Marshall, Tom Taylor, and Mr. W. G. Wills, as they note “that remarkably logical deduction” of the misguided journalist who writes “the examples given are sufficient to show most conclusively that the age is at the present time greatly in need of competent dramatists.” There are the “competent dramatists” ready to laugh or frown down the rash writer who laments the absence of their new works from the stage; so how can the age be “greatly in need” of that which it possesses? We are at any rate happy as a playgoing people in the consciousness that we have amongst us the authors of *Our Club*, *Our Boys*, *Twist Axe and Crown*, and *Olivia*; is it not base ingratitude to accuse them because managers blindly adhere to their favourite alternate doses of adaptation and revival? It is the very authors themselves who are most to be commiserated, as we shall discover when we come to the gist of Mr. Burnand’s letter.

And what is Mr. Burnand’s own explanation of the fact that so little original work is seen at our theatres? It will perhaps be fairest to quote his own words: “There is, I fearlessly assert, no lack of competent dramatists. But where is the work for their idle hands to do—for adaptation is but recreation—as long as managers, unable to rely on their own unaided judgment, eagerly bid against one another for any piece that has received the Parisian *imprimatur*? And then the lucky purchaser of the right of representation places it in the hands of some competent dramatist—no, I forgot such persons have no more existence than Mrs. Harris or the gods of the

heathen; so let us say, in the hands of some incompetent dramatist, but competent adapter, who trims the play according to certain requirements, real or imaginary, and—the trick is done! At this simple and easy work the competent adapter and incompetent dramatist may make a little fortune, as he can safely set the pecuniary results of two adaptations, which may have occupied his leisure for a month, against those of an original piece, which has cost three or four months', or it may be a year's, close study, constant labour, and great anxiety." Here lies the burden of Mr. Burnand's song, which is echoed by Mr. Gilbert in a letter to the *Times*. Managers like adaptations because they are comparatively safe; dramatists have to go in for them, whether they like them or no, because they provide an easy way of earning money. The fault of the system, if fault it be, is not that of the dramatist at all. It is that of the commercial-minded manager, who seeks the surest possible return for his outlay of money over a new play.

That there is a great deal of justice in this "dramatist's defence" may be at once admitted. Whilst managers can get hold of plays which have passed satisfactorily test performances, and whilst they can get them well and cheaply altered to fit the English stage, it is in vain to hope that they will all agree to run risks with original English plays in order to encourage English playwrights. It may indeed be doubted whether this system of qualified protection for home productions is altogether to be desired, even could it be secured. In the meanwhile it follows inevitably that the original creative effort of our dramatists suffers by a competition which handicaps it somewhat unfairly, not only in the preliminary test which managers get when they order adaptations from the French, but also in the limited range of social problems with which the British dramatist is nowadays allowed by the Lord Chamberlain to deal. This latter disability has recently been emphatically urged by Mr. Gilbert in a suggestive essay, which we should be glad to see expanded.

But when all allowance has been made for this discouragement of our dramatic authors, and when due weight has been given to Mr. Burnand's indictment of "adaptation from the French," as the cause of all dramatic shortcomings just now, there remain some considerations from an opposite point of view, which must, we fear, go far towards proving that, after all, the full competence of our original playwrights is not completely proven. Reverting for a moment to the passing cause of the dispute, the review of the doings at our theatres, we have to note that before recourse was had to an adaptation of *Les Fourchambault* at the Haymarket, Mr. H. J. Byron's *Conscience Money* had failed to achieve any marked success. We

cannot help contrasting the failure of Messrs. Albery and Hatton's original melodrama at the Princess's with the success so readily attained by Mr. Burnand with his version of *Une Cause Célèbre*, and we feel inclined to ask whether, if he had invented a melodrama instead of translating one, he believes he would have secured an equal triumph? Then as to the Court programme, no one can believe that in his exceptionally long recess Mr. Hare has not had *time* enough and to spare "to look about" for a new comedy, and it certainly seems fair to conclude that if he knew where to lay his hands on another *Olivia*, his enterprise would not have allowed him to fall back upon a couple of well-worn adaptations. Similarly Mr. Bancroft is, we may rest assured, quite ignorant whether to look for another Tom Robertson, or the new comedy-writer would have had his chance long ago in preference to the clever adapters of *Nos Intimes* and *Dora*. The dramatists themselves have surely something to answer for in that their original efforts should by practical men, with so much at stake in their productions, be regarded with deep suspicion. The managers are, after all, only anxious to be on the safe side; and if our playwrights were a little more uniformly strong in their creative efforts, the safe side would soon be considered to be in the direction of English plays written for English playgoers.

DRAMATIC CRITICISM OF THE DAY.

IT can never be a very pleasant, and rarely perhaps, a very profitable, task to criticise the critics. He who thus even for the briefest of spells becomes a critic is haunted from the moment when he begins to attack another critic by the recollection that at the best he is "dog eating dog." The case is of course different if the criticism be the angry retort wrung out of disappointed author or creator. No considerations, save those of discretion and judgment, need intervene to prevent his demolishing those who misunderstand or misrepresent his work after the fashion most to his taste and best within his range. It is all a fair stand-up fight. "You abuse my novel, or my pictures, or my play, and I will abuse your incompetence to give an opinion on the subject." If the editor of the journal which employs the unkind critic will allow it, the author will imply that the judge must be either crass and ignorant, prejudiced and unsympathetic, unfair and venal, according to the state of his temper and his experience. This species of dispute is as old as the hills, and as the occasion on which the remark, "Sir, you're no gentleman!" was conclusively answered

by "Sir, you're no judge." The personal element, in fact, which has done so much for the deterioration and degradation of modern journalism is sure to be introduced, and this even though the criticism in question be signed by no name or pseudonym. To those individually interested in the subject the identity of the writer of each important critique—at any rate on theatrical subjects—is known perfectly well. The number of those who in the daily and weekly papers have anything worth hearing to say concerning the dramatic work of the day is not very large, and it is doubtless kept smaller than it would otherwise be by the favourite journalistic practice of killing several birds with one stone, of making one visit to the play supply material for criticism in three or even four different papers. How far the word criticism can apply to this kind of multiplied effort we shall have hereafter to inquire; in the meantime its existence may be noted for what it is worth as an indication of the spirit which prompts much of the dramatic criticism of the day.

Leaving out of sight, then, so far as is possible the personal details of the subject, we find ourselves face to face with a question suggested by an essay from the pen of Mr. E. L. Blanchard in our last issue. Mr. Blanchard, then, whose long experience certainly gives him the right to lay down the law of the matter, gives a list of the different causes at work to produce the strange variety of opinion expressed concerning what might be thought mere matters of theatrical fare. The physical condition of the individual playgoer as he takes his place in the house, the position with regard to the stage which is allotted to him, the question of long versus short sight, the accuracy of the organs of hearing, the chance whether the great "effects" of the evening are made on the "prompt" or the "o. p." side of the stage—all these may, he says, have their appreciable weight in determining whether, on an individual playgoer, an individual performance produces a favourable or an unfavourable impression. It is the close observation of over three decades which has discovered this subtle chain of cause and effect; and most playgoers will be ready to acknowledge the justice of Mr. Blanchard's remarks. And yet when he goes on to point out, as instances of the divergences of opinion the flat contradictions of *Globe* and *Echo* as to the merit of Mrs. Hermann Vezin's *Lady Macbeth* at Drury Lane, it is clear that there must be a screw loose somewhere in such criticism. It ought not to be possible for two commentators writing of the same delineation of character to affirm, on the one hand, that it "rose in the later scenes to absolute power," and on the other, that it was "a modified failure." That the two critics, writing of Locke's music as performed on the same occasion, should utterly

disagree is not perhaps to be wondered at, for dramatic critics need not know much of orchestral and choral work, though to be sure they might keep silent on the subject if it be beyond their reach. But that complete failure to agree about the artist's merit of a performance like Mrs. Vezin's *Lady Macbeth*—and examples of the same downright disagreement might readily be multiplied *ad nauseam*—gives rise to the question whether such criticism must not in its very essence be canonless. How can we account for the erratic divergences displayed in our journals whenever an important new performance is given?

Without denying the general good taste, the keen appreciation of that which is good, and the honest hatred of that which is evil, that characterize much of our most ephemeral dramatic criticism, there is nevertheless much which needs improvement in the system on which it is based. In the first place, the eagerness to make a new piece or a new performance an item of news for the paper is leading slowly but surely back towards the system of first-night criticism, ready to order with the rolls and butter the next morning after the play. The managerial habit of giving most important *premières* on Saturday used to keep this in check, and that it did so was a very good thing, since the few—the *Observer*—suffered for the benefit of the many, and the representatives of the large daily papers had at least the advantage of the best part of a day wherein to excogitate their verdicts. Now, however, certain managers avoid Saturday “first nights,”—surely amongst the most delightful of intellectual gatherings!—as though they were dangerous; and in consequence certain of the critics, ambitious beyond their powers, try to give in their comments on the same evening. For obvious reasons, it is not fair to ask any man who has not specially trained himself for it, and does possess special capabilities, to submit himself to a test such as this. The hurry, and still more the appearance of hurry, with the never-ceasing demands for scraps of “copy,”—the surrounding conditions of noise and heat and doubtful atmosphere, together with the fact that four or five hours spent in a gas-laden, crowded theatre make a bad preparation for mental work of any kind,—all these make it impossible for any of our critics, save one or two, to do anything like justice to their judgment, their descriptive power, or even their English composition, in the course of a first-night notice. And if they do scant justice to themselves and to their grammar, uttering crude contradictory opinions and constructing involved sentences which defy the operation of parsing, what sort of justice can they be expected to do to the author and the actors on whose efforts they are pronouncing so summary a verdict?

But apart from the difficulties obviously suffered by many of the dramatic critics when they strive to accomplish a task beyond their usual line, "first-night" criticism of this order is to be deprecated because the struggle to accomplish it, made by any except the readiest and most practised writers, generally ends in an approach towards the baneful old system of "dramatic reporting." The writer who cannot at the moment steady himself for analysis of the motive of the new play, or for cool appreciation of the acting, naturally betakes himself to picturesque gushing over the intentions of the management, over the dresses, the scenery, and even over the audience. Something like a column is to be filled somehow; if it cannot be filled with criticism, it is filled with descriptive reporting. Descriptive reporting has its value as a journalistic art, and when it is good of its kind it may doubtless be applied usefully to theatrical as well as to other subjects. But surely the proper time for it to appear in important columns, even when at its best, is emphatically not the morning after the "first night." When at anything but its best, this kind of criticism is so bad that it is always unreadable.

So much for the criticism itself. There are causes apart from its inherent faults which, if they be not nipped in the bud, may in time, and that no long time, end in diminishing its weight, both with managers and the public. Thus it is certainly a pity that all papers do not pay for such seats as they require—as for example, the *Times* and the *World* have done for a long time past. In many instances the idea of the value of the places being regarded by the proprietor of the journal as of the slightest moment is, of course, absurd; but such a contingency is at least possible and has occurred with the smaller fry of the press. Much more is to be said against the continued employment as dramatic critics of gentlemen who have blossomed forth as dramatic authors. This cannot, it seems to us, be right in principle, even though it be found to work not unfairly in practice. Is it in human nature to believe that a dramatist can find it in his heart to roundly abuse the productions of friendly managers, even though they be bad? Could his own pieces, if they chanced to be failures, receive the full blame due to them in the columns of his own paper? Could he avoid unconsciously writing up the species of dramatic work best within his range—his favourite, because he does it best himself? And even if he never went out of his way to praise the managers who accept his plays, to run down their rivals, to champion the actors who "made" his pieces, and to attack that portion of the theatrical world in which he and his clique did not live—if in fact he were not only an honest man, but a writer with perfect control

over his pen and a philosopher able to sink at will all questions of self-interest; even then a censorious world would point at him the finger of suspicion, and would imply the calumny though it were only by a shrug of the shoulder. The imputation of such base motives for a critic's administration of praise and blame is something very like a public misfortune, and this although the inner world of the drama and the press be thoroughly agreed that it is undeserved. The dramatic critic should be above suspicion, or, at any rate, should be above that kind of natural suspicion which he may avoid by retreating from an equivocal and compromising position. His views of dramatic art, both abstract and concrete, he may safely give in half-a-dozen channels; but he cannot with any security to his own good name combine the functions of popular playwright with those of professional commentator upon the efforts of his rivals. Another mistake to which we have already alluded is that of the critics who are reducing their dramatic criticism to a species of multifold reporting, by sending in accounts of *premières* necessarily identical in substance and in opinion to two or more papers. This kind of work in "mental flimsy" can in the end but injure both the position of critics in general and the intellectual force of the multifold reporter in particular. Intended probably as a protest against the poor rate of pay often allotted to the dramatic critic, it must result in lowering that rate still further.

Let it not be supposed that we assert in a wholesale way that all first-night dramatic criticism is bad; some of it, as we have seen, is necessary, and is fairly good of its kind; let us not be thought to hold that the critic who has stalls sent to him and who writes successful plays is prejudiced and venal, or that there may not be circumstances under which a "second" notice is quite defensible. We only maintain that the tendency is in all these cases a dangerous one, and we call attention to it only that we may strengthen the arms of those who are doing all that in them lies to escape from false positions, to correct old mistakes and to avoid new ones.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACTOR.

IF we wished to make it as unlikely as possible that any given calling should bestow social honour upon those who follow it, we could not well adopt a surer plan than the bestowal of irresponsibility upon its professors. At first sight it might perhaps appear that the gift implied a benefit, inasmuch as the recipient would gain in freedom of action, of thought, and of speech, by the removal of the fetters

which bind most of his fellow-men. He may seem to be a favoured creature, permitted by custom to break through the social regulations which others must, in penalty of social punishment, observe as though they were the written laws of the land. The fact that he is a naturalized subject of Bohemia enables him to snap his fingers at many of the minor statutes which govern the community in whose midst he works; his exceptional liberty makes him a subject of envy, and by an easy process of transition gives popularity to the profession which confers upon him his freedom. But yet it is by no means hard to show that the apparent blessing thus tacitly conveyed is but a curse in disguise, and that they who insist upon your bestowing it are in fact injuring rather than aiding the objects of their favour.

For years and years it has been a theory in certain quarters that actors and actresses are specially favoured beings, that they may disregard restrictions which the workers in other fields of art dare not disregard, and that little or nothing must be expected of them as members of society. This view of their social status is doubtless nothing more than a survival of the estimation in which the stage-player was held in the days of the Puritans, and in those later days when by a natural tendency he proceeded to justify the worst that had been said of him. Call this liberty licence, and it will afford a weapon ready to the hands of all narrow-minded people who are anxious to attack the stage and those associated with it. But it is not when this low estimate of the actor's responsibility as a member of society is held and proclaimed by his avowed enemies that we would quarrel with it. These detractors are only following up the advice implied in the proverb about giving a dog a bad name; and they are so far justified, in that their ignorance of the actual state of the case prevents their realizing the extent of their injustice. It is when we find those who are or ought to be the actor's best friends giving their support to the mischievous fallacy that it becomes time to protest. The reckless accusations of an adversary may be safely left to obtain such credence as they are worth; the apologies of an injudicious or false friend must be exposed at once and at whatever cost. Perhaps the most flagrant instance of the mistaken line of argument on this difficult point to which we have to call attention is to be found in the course of a typical article which appeared in a high-class contemporary some short time since. The writer of this paper, albeit dealing with what should have been a most sympathetic subject in the biography of the famous actress Charlotte Cushman, is utterly out of sympathy with that which ought to be the aim of all true friends of the actor. He admits that "it is dishonouring to the members of an arduous and artistic profession that something of the

evil reputation of the rogues and the vagabonds with whom they were formerly associated should cling to their skirts." But having granted thus much, he proceeds, in the most cynical manner, to question "whether actors do not find a full measure of compensation for want of respect in the ordinary treatment awarded to them in the species of affection they constantly obtain." That is to say, the player is a kind of social spaniel, ready to suffer a certain amount of unkindness or contemptuous neglect provided that he gets a bone or a biscuit now and again, if he begs prettily for it and amuses his owner. "Strive as we will," he says, "to treat the actor as an absolutely responsible being, it is difficult to do so. The unreal life eclipses the real. Spoiled children of the public, they occupy an enviable position, and they will make but a sorry exchange when the world listens to the complaint they occasionally utter, accepts them as they think they would like to be accepted, and endows them with a species of responsibility out of which its possessors have as yet failed to extract much comfort."

It is probable that the journalist who evolved for himself this singular view of the attitude of society towards the actor, and of the actor's most fitting frame of mind with reference to his patrons, did not pause to ask himself how far he meant this theory of irresponsibility to be carried. Where is the dramatic artist to draw the line in his non-observance of social obligations? How is he to know when he has trespassed as far as he safely can upon the good-natured tolerance of his admirers? He is, we are told, a spoiled child; and spoiled children, we know, occasionally get into trouble, and generally find some little difficulty in retaining their popularity with anyone beyond their small circle of admiring relatives. By what rule is the actor to govern his conduct so as to avoid overstepping a boundary already extended on his special behalf? In other words, what are the details of private life concerning which the actor is to be held less responsible than his neighbour who does not chance to earn a living on the stage? The question is one which ought, perhaps, to be settled before we attempt any consideration of the good likely to be derived by the actor from the indulgence claimed for him by his *soi-disant* friends; but the two phases of the subject cannot well be separated. If it is for the advantage of a man that he should be exempted from the operation of social laws which govern other men, those who are his well-wishers must not be selfish enough to complain of the practical difficulties in the way of this exemption. Let us grant for the moment that it is possible to regard the actor as a being not "absolutely responsible" for his conduct. He may, we presume, be a neglectful, if not an unfaithful, husband, a careless father, a slippery tenant; he may be every man's guest, and no one's

host; he may malign his rivals behind their backs; his habits may be the reverse of temperate, his attire either seedy or ostentatiously fine, his conversation "shoppy"; and his personal vanity may be as great as his personal pride is small. In money matters, small or large, he need not be relied upon; he may marry without adequate means; he may, without a blush, look for charity the moment his work, or his power of work, forsakes him; and when he dies he will not be expected to have made any provision for his family. He is a "spoiled child," so pretty and so winning that he is constantly let off both his lessons and his punishments. He is such a good fellow, and his profession wins for him so much admiration, that he is to be rewarded by not being held "absolutely responsible."

But is the reward worth having? Would it not rather, even if it could be bestowed, be a curse in disguise? As a matter of fact every year sees members of the dramatic profession less and less inclined to assume that their artistic labours give them a right to neglect their duties to society. They see what some of their friends are apparently unable to see, that by Bohemianism—to use the word in the perverted sense applied to it of late years—they gain nothing within their profession, and they lose much beyond it. They realize more and more that the "species of affection" which they win as vagabonds can in no way compensate them for loss of the respect which they may deserve as men. But if they had not seen this there would surely be danger, as well as folly, in thus authoritatively preaching to them the delight of irresponsibility. No more fatal advice could be given than that which strives to induce actors and actresses to believe that off the stage they are not as other men and women. *Ceteris paribus*, the best man, the man of most sympathy with his fellow-men, most consideration for their feelings, and most respect for the social obligations which he incurs, will be the best actor; and the truest, purest, worthiest woman will be the best actress. The calling of the player we hold to be amongst the very highest, and its lofty position amongst other callings, so far from giving the license of irresponsibility to its professors, merely imposes upon them higher duties. Here, as elsewhere, *noblesse oblige*.

Portraits.

XIII.—MISS PATEMAN.

FOURTEEN or fifteen years ago two sprightly and intelligent girls might have been found playing in the West of England. Bella and Grace Theodore were natives of Reading, and had adopted the stage without receiving any encouragement to do so from their parents. Miss Bella, with whom we are now more immediately concerned, had made her first appearance on the stage at Worcester, representing the child in *A Hard Struggle* and *Little Red Riding Hood* in a pantomime. The young actress was by no means unsuccessful, and as time passed on it became evident that she had many important qualifications for the profession she had chosen. In 1869, after marrying Mr. Pateman, whom she had met in a company at Hanley, she paid a visit to America, and in the following year played a round of characters at Booth's Theatre, New York, under the leadership of Mr. Edwin Booth. Here she was undoubtedly at a disadvantage, but that she was capable of bearing the whole burden of a play on her shoulders was satisfactorily proved when, in 1873, she appeared as Mercy Merrick in the *New Magdalen*. "Miss Pateman," wrote the *World* critic, "took all the honours. In the contest between the two women she treads on the limits of great acting. Her energy and feeling carry the house by storm; while her fine voice sustains all the inflexions of sorrow, anger, and fierce resolution." From New York Miss Pateman proceeded to San Francisco, where her success was not less unequivocal. "In pathetic or tender passages," the *News Letter* critic declares, "Miss Pateman can hardly be excelled; in parts requiring power or fire she is superb." On the last night of her engagement in San Francisco this actress received an unexpected and substantial compliment. The stage-manager, Mr. Eytinge, met her as she was bowing herself off the stage, and, in the name of the management and a few friends, presented her with a pair of diamond earrings of the value of £250. In the autumn of 1876 she appeared at the Olympic Theatre as Lady Clancarty. The public and the critics were almost of one accord in welcoming her to the London stage. The *Times*, it is true, was somewhat chary of praise. "For her performance of this character," said the critic, "Miss Pateman has been much and in many respects justly



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WOODBURYTYPE

Yours truly
Bella Paley

praised. She has evidently studied with much care, and has made herself a thorough mistress of the mechanical details of her art,—the only true means to the attainment of that higher excellence to which we should be sorry to say Miss Pateman may not hope to aspire. At present, however, the results of her study, though perfect in themselves, are a little too apparent. Nor has she as yet mastered the secret of those last delicate touches which make that appear to be nature which we know to be art. Her acting, though artistic, is somewhat formal and cold; it lacks fire, and at times even grace. We miss the tenderness of Lady Clancarty, and though the passion is accurately enough expressed, it scarcely rings true. Nor do we think Miss Pateman has invested the part with quite enough of the ‘grand air’ which, by virtue of her birth and courtly training, would belong to the heroine. We have pointed out the faults which Miss Pateman’s acting seems to us at present to show. They are faults, however, from which an actress who has had patience and intelligence enough to thoroughly ground herself in the first principles of her art may be credited certainly with the desire, and possibly with the means, to free herself.” But these utterances were drowned in the chorus of praise showered upon her by other writers. “The play,” says the *Daily Telegraph*, “gains its true dramatic meaning and its marked poetic colour from the assistance of an actress at once so highly trained and so naturally emotional. In the idea of Miss Pateman, Lady Clancarty is a high-bred, gentle, sensitive lady, who unconsciously has been affected, influenced, and swayed by the vague mystery of her unknown husband. She is some such maiden as Elaine, and when her husband comes to wake her from her dream she is enchanted with the reality, but somehow vexed at the termination of her life’s romance. This tender and poetic view of the character is shown by a thousand infinitesimal and delicate touches. The scene in which Clancarty avows his passion in the disguise of a friend first persuades the audience that the actress takes a beautiful and highly ideal view of the character. She is not the coquette making the most of a chance intrigue with a handsome lover, but the hungry woman straining her modesty to the last point—but no more—in order to feed on the story of her phantom lord. The effect of it on the audience was very marked, for the touches were womanly, the grief was so touching, the abandonment so pathetic.” The advantage gained by the young actress was confirmed by her acting in the *Wife’s Secret*, the *Scuttled Ship*, and *Proof*; the defects noticed in her earlier performances in London are gradually disappearing, and we may expect that before long she will take an even higher position on the stage than she at present occupies.

The Round Table.

AUTHORS AND MANAGERS.

BY F. C. BURNAND.

IN fulfilment of a promise publicly made in my letter to the *Daily Telegraph* on Competent Dramatists, I went into the subject thoroughly, and wrote—I swear it “by this hand”—twenty-five sheets of MS., rolled them up, addressed the packet, and despatched *my boy* with it to the office of the magazine (I lay an emphasis on “*my boy*” for reasons). It was duly delivered, and *my boy*, having discharged himself of the responsibility, returned home rejoicing and as light-hearted as any boy who has done his duty should be. So far so good. But now comes another boy on the scene—a boy belonging to the office. This boy was a devil; a boy who could have gone about hopping like Barnaby Rudge’s raven, crying, “I’m a devil, I’m a devil!” He was a devil of a boy: of course I mean a printer’s devil of a boy. For days afterwards—and too late, alas! too late—arrived a despairing letter from the editor of this magazine, saying that, despite all his efforts and all the efforts of everybody connected with *The Theatre*, my manuscript of twenty-five pages had been hopelessly lost—and so had the boy! Boy and manuscript have disappeared unaccountably. Whether he is still wandering in his mind—where, as Talfourd wrote,

“He can’t go far, the space is too confined;”

or whether, unable to control his curiosity, he opened the MS. and became so wrapped up in its contents as to be unable to tear himself away from the work, and so becoming hopelessly lost in thought was never again found in reality, it is next to impossible to say. All that is known of him is that he has vanished—he and the manuscript. The editor may sing hopefully

“He will return; I know him well;”

but some other boy as antiphonically reply

“He won’t return, I know him better.”

But, I tremble for the future of that boy, of that lost boy! For if ever a boy were lost we have found him now. The Lost Tribe is no

mystery compared with the Editor's Lost Boy. Yes ! I repeat it, I tremble for his future with the stupendous secrets contained in my MS. in his possession. What may he not do ? What may he do ? He may start a new Secret Dramatic Authors' Society. He may revolutionise all existing literary and dramatic arrangements, and go to the bad generally. So at once, while there is yet time to prevent, or to try and prevent, such startling results as I foresee from the disappearance of the Lost Boy, who may have sailed for the Undiscovered Islands, there to join the Missing Gainsborough—the Lost Duchess—I will attempt to supply in brief what was stated at length in the manuscript irretrievably gone astray. *O si sic omnia*, the good-natured reader may exclaim. Let him ! I have still pen and paper, and so seriously—on my word seriously—here goes.

What I offer are a few suggestions towards settling a difficult question between English dramatic authors and managers. Premiss—A piece is worth what it will bring. I think this will be at once admitted. A piece is worth to the proprietor and producer what it will bring them. Who are the proprietor and producer ? The author and the manager. Of course, the proprietor is not necessarily the author ; but with that I have nothing to do. Putting aside all question of literary merit, putting aside all question of time and labour given to the production of an original English work, or of an adaptation of a foreign one, I simply assert that a piece is worth what it will bring. The composition of an original work must, ordinarily, take the author months, a year, or even years. An adaptation will, ordinarily, occupy an author days, weeks, or perhaps a couple of months. Some men can do equally well in a day what will take others a week. The result I am supposing to be the same. I am not a great arithmetician ; arithmetic is decidedly not my *forte*. Give me, however, a sum in addition, and in an hour I will give you the correct total. Give that same sum to a practised counting-house clerk, and he will give you the same result in five minutes. Give it to the calculating boy, and in half a second he will give the correct result. So with the adaptation of a foreign play. Some men are born adapters ; others have adaptation thrust upon them. If, therefore, the premiss is granted, that “any play is worth what it will bring,” it is clear that, as an original play, whose property is in its author, is worth to the author and the manager what it will bring to them, so an adaptation is worth what it will bring to its author, its adapter, and the manager who produces it. I do not, of course, consider any payment to author or adapter as “what it produces.” What it produces is what it brings into the treasury of the theatre when it is brought out, *i.e.*, what the public pay to see it. Now, a manager is a shop-

keeper, and must display the goods best calculated to attract the public. He is no more bound to deal exclusively with English material than I am to eat English mustard. If the manager thinks that a French piece, doctored for the English market, is more profitable than what native talent can produce, he is quite right to deal in French pieces, and to employ native talent in so doctoring them. But as the doctoring required varies from five to two hundred per cent., so that in some, and indeed, in many, instances, very little of the original material remains, the adapter's work is more often that of an English author writing as *collaborateur* with the French or German author, than of a mere adapter by way of translation, or, if I may use the term, by way of "transference"—by which I mean a process of transferring the French original to the English stage, on which the doctoring will be about forty per cent. But it will be granted that in no case of adaptation from a foreign original will the English author's work be equal to the exhausting labours required by original creation. In an adaptation, plot, characters, construction, and dialogue are brought ready to the adapter's hand. Therefore, a very natural objection arises against an adapter's receiving for a successful adaptation the same remuneration as the author of an equally successful creation. Now, supposing it admitted that a play, whether adaptation or original, is worth what it will bring, how is this evident difficulty to be adjusted? Here are the suggestions towards a remedy:

Managers should agree to pay ten per cent. on their gross receipts, or ten per cent. on the receipts after a certain reduction, (but this is a matter for future arrangement) for *their entire evening's entertainment*. If one author provides the whole entertainment he alone takes the ten per cent. If two, or more, they share the percentage in a certain fixed proportion, acts counting as shares, and burlesques of five or more scenes reckoning as the acts. The English Dramatic Authors' Society should be in correspondence with the French Dramatic Authors' Society, and the two societies should be bound to act as each other's agent to the exclusion of all direct dealings with managers. The French dramatist would select his English author for any required adaptation, and according to the work required so should the shares of French authors and English adapters be fixed. Broadly they might be estimated as equal, the adapter (whether French or English) paying the fees for copying and the percentage due to the society. This would make no difference to the manager who pays ten per cent. on his gross receipts for the entertainment, whatever it may be. It would, indeed, be an advantage, as no sum down would have to be paid to the original author. The English manager would merely deal

with the English Dramatic Authors' Society for his piece, and his payments would be made straight to the society which is responsible to its members. Then, supposing this at work, the adapter would be in precisely the same position as a *collaborateur*. M. Chose, the French author of the original, and Mr. Smith, the English author who has adapted M. Chose's work, will divide their ten per cent. or their proportion (if there are other pieces not by them in the manager's programme) of the ten per cent. This scheme supposes all authors, whether novices or professed, to be members of the Dramatic Authors' Society. There will be no haggling or bargaining, even in the case of young authors; for a piece, no matter by whom it is written, is worth what it will bring. Where a manager takes £7,000 the author whose work has brought this in—and the author is the *raison d'être* of the manager, theatre, actors, &c.—will take £700. I merely state this broadly. I am perfectly aware that there are other considerations which may go towards the modification of this scheme, such as arise from the manager's expenses of production. But to this point it is evident the managers must address themselves, as it only concerns them. I want to see an arrangement which shall be fairly adjusted and mutually beneficial. At present authors are underpaid, and it suits them better, far better, to adapt foreign plays provided by the managers than to devote time and labour to original work. In France collaboration is the rule. And why? because there is an uniform system of payment by percentage, as I have here suggested. In fact, I am doing little more now than “adapting” the plan from the French. English authors will not work together as *collaborateurs*, because at present it is not worth their while. How greatly the national drama would be benefited by the collaboration of those who are good at plot and construction with those whose *spécialité* is dialogue is very evident.

THE HAMLET OF THE DAY.

BY LADY HARDY.

OF all the characters Shakspeare has created, Hamlet is certainly the one that has caused most discussion, and concerning whom the most varied opinions still exist, despite the critical compositions of the various scholars who have devoted their time and intellect to the elucidation of that metaphysical mystery, which contradictory criticism has rendered more cloudy to men's minds

rather than made clear. Hamlet still remains a sombre mystical figure in the foreground of dramatic history. Of the real Amleth or Hambelet, who formed the nucleus out of which the genius of Shakspeare evolved our Hamlet, little is known,—indeed nothing that could give us a clue to the character of the actual man as he lived and moved in long-past ages. The Danish historians are singularly silent upon the subject, and have supplied but meagre information concerning “the most misfortunate prince that lyved and dyed in Denmark.” They have contributed the mere dry-as-dust bones, which the poet gathered up and glorified with his genius, clothed with most human feeling and divine thought, till they took shape and developed into the melancholy prince we know.

Strange, that in all countries *Hamlet* has been the favourite of all Shakspeare’s plays; all alike seize and dissect it, according to some special theory of their own. Mirrored in the German mind, he is a reflection of themselves, and shadows forth their style of thought, and tardy, labyrinthian mode of action. They represent the character as realistic to a degree; a dreamer, overflowing with speculative philosophy, vacillating, and carrying on perpetual war between the world within and the world without, seeing things not as they are, but reflected in his own distempered mind. He is so occupied with his own thoughts, his imagination being so tinged with a natural melancholy, that he becomes oblivious of things that are passing round him; he feels and chafes against the inactivity of his nature, which he has not the strength to overcome, and assails it only with empty self-reproaches; they regard his madness as simulated only; a mere ruse not to pique curiosity, but to ward off too close a scrutiny of his turbulent irresponsible mind—he is full of passionate, tender and noble thoughts, which bear no fruit in action. He can preach, but he is too weak to practise as he preaches, and is forced at last by a combination of circumstances into the one tragic crowning act in which his life is lost and vengeance satisfied.

Generations of men, the fellow-countrymen of Shakspeare, have arisen, and one after another essayed the interpretation of his *chef-d’œuvre*; some have walked in the way of tradition, and adopted the reading of their predecessors, and a few have shaped their course and decided on readings of their own. Foremost in the latter rank stands Mr. Henry Irving; he tells us, and we can well believe it, that the Hamlet he presents to us is the result of a life’s study. The originality of the conception is at first startling, especially to that army of old playgoers whose ideas have been marshalled into order and arranged by the actors of their youth.

Mr. Irving's departure from the traditionary Hamlet must create general attention, in fact he has cut himself adrift from it altogether; he has killed the stage Hamlet beyond the powers of resurrection; rejecting all precedent, he has taken the character to his heart, carefully dissected and considered every part of it. With scholarly judgment and a poetical imagination he has entered into the spirit; clothed himself, as far as it is possible to do so, with the metaphysical nature, and given to the world the result of his subtle analysis. The Hamlet he presents to us may be rejected by some who have pet theories of their own,—ideals which no giant genius can destroy; but many will not only gratefully accept his interpretation, but will feel that they are brought in closer connection with the Hamlet Shakspeare knew. The character is full of inconsistencies, and in the midst of our sympathies with the self-tormenting melancholy prince, we are forced to feel the feebleness of his will, the innate cowardice of the nature that dares not "leap at what it will," always resolving and wavering, never acting. From the first moment he enters upon the stage, lounging with a sour discontented air, in the rear of his mother's retinue, we feel that no heroic creature will stride to the front to compel our admiration and carry our sympathies by storm; it is a very human being, with faults and frailties like our own. He is a gentleman, courteous in manner, pungent in speech, but with a mind clouded and ill at ease. The question of Hamlet's sanity or insanity has always been a moot point, some maintaining the one view, some the other; Mr. Irving sails between the two, and represents him as neither wholly mad nor wholly sane; we feel that over-study, aided by an over-sensitive organization, has given his brain a slight twist, and sent it a pin's point awry; the sudden death of his father, followed, so speedily, by the shameless marriage of his mother, gives it a shock, and it trembles in the balance; next comes the supernatural visitation, the declaration of his father's murder, which utterly disturbs his reason; he cannot accept and dares not reject the ghost's revelation, and at last he resolves on the play as a touchstone to decide the fact. All this time his thoughts are adrift in a world of speculative philosophy, wherein his original self is swallowed up and lost; he is perfectly aware of his own eccentricities,—extremes meet in his mind,—the thread of insanity which is running through his whole nature makes it so hard for him to unravel the tangled skein of his own life, and, with a cunning perfectly intelligible to those who have studied the working of a diseased brain, he professes that he only *seems* to be what he really is; the actual disturbance of his mind will show itself in spite of his efforts to hide it; he grasps at shadows, and

lets the real substance of wrong lie flourishing close beside him, while he shrouds himself and his infirm purpose in a mist of marvellous philosophy. The method in his madness creeps out strangely in his interviews with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and is most subtly shadowed forth in Mr. Irving's acting, as the idea slowly dawns upon his mind, that they come as spies from the King, and are trying to "get the wind of" him; he appeals to them, with the gentle dignity of a wounded spirit, to tell him whether they were "sent for or no"; then he lashes them with ironical phrases and breaks into a storm of sublime scorn, which make them cover before him.

In the scenes with Ophelia and the Queen, Mr. Irving touches the highest point of that pure art which is akin to nature,—the substantial shadow indeed, if such a phrase is admissible, and follows her so closely as sometimes to become incorporate with her, the two commingling till it is difficult to separate one from the other. Mr. Irving was always good in these scenes; now he has heightened, deepened, and touched up his original study, till he has left nothing for the most exacting taste to desire. Perhaps the delicate grace and responsive spirit of Miss Ellen Terry's Ophelia helps to bring out, in his acting, the strong lights and shadows; for heretofore he has been but tamely supported in that scene. His tender, nay, passionate love for Ophelia, breaks through all bounds; his stern resolution, wherewith he holds it in bonds of iron, cannot keep it down; his nervous hands tremble at the touch of her garments; we see that, against his will, his whole soul goes out to her; his face is alive with passion; he loses himself in his emotions; he struggles to tear himself away from her, but again and again, as by a human magnet, he is drawn back; in a storm of feelings he flings harsh words at the fair young creature, while his heart is breaking for love of her; and even as his outspread hands are raised to thrust her from him, his eyes cling despairingly to her face: one moment we feel that he must close longing arms round her, or fall sobbing at her feet; the next he thrusts her from him, and with a "*soupeçon de brutalité*," as cruel as it is cowardly, overwhelms her with satirical scorn, and shrinks shuddering away, bidding her "go to a nunnery." No word-painting can do justice to this portion of Mr. Irving's acting, wherein exquisite tenderness is combined with cruel insulting harshness. To be appreciated it must be seen, and no one who has a taste for dramatic art will be satisfied by seeing it only once. In the scene in the Queen's closet the actor is equally fine; here the same passions are brought into play, but under a widely different aspect. While he overwhelms his mother with bitter reproaches, that spring from a real tangible cause, a regretful

tenderness mingles with his wrathful denunciations. When the Queen tells him that he "has cleft her heart in twain," there is profound pathos in his voice and action, as he flings his arms round her and implores her to "throw away the worser part of it, and live the purer with the other half."

"HE WOULD BE AN ACTOR."

By DUTTON COOK.

ON the 5th October, 1829, at Covent Garden Theatre, Miss Fanny Kemble made her first appearance "on any stage," as the playbill had it. She acted Juliet; the Romeo of the night was Mr. Abbott, an actor of respectable ability, but inclined to boisterous art and robustious effects. Must we speak of Mr. Abbott's Romeo? ask Leigh Hunt in his *Tatler*. "We hear he is a pleasant person everywhere but on the stage. . . . Mr. Abbott has taken it into his head that noise is tragedy, and a tremendous noise he accordingly makes. It is Stentor with a trumpet. Presently a new Romeo entered upon the scene. This was a Mr. Keppel—his first appearance in 'London.'" Mr. Abbott's Romeo was described as "a hurricane"; Mr. Keppel's Romeo was a dead calm. Leigh Hunt wrote of him: "Whether it was that his breath had been taken away by the turbulency of his predecessor, or that he had too awful a sense of the part he had chosen, or of a first night in London, or of what might be expected of him from his name and connections (which we understand are of particular order), Mr. Keppel went to the other extreme from Mr. Abbott, and produced accordingly a feeble impression. . . . We are bound to say that as far as we saw it, the performance of Mr. Keppel was a failure on the side of want of energy and depth. . . . We must add that from what we heard of his tone and emphasis, we doubt whether he understands the beauty of the character, or even the distinction between the constituent parts of it, and what is only incidental and by the way." Mr. Keppel was allowed no further opportunity at Covent Garden. In the following season he was appearing in melodrama at what was called the Queen's Theatre—it is now known as the Prince of Wales's. Among other characters, he personated Albert, in *The Spirit of the Mist*; Edgar in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Count Zingerod in *The Russian Captive*, and Ben Mousa, an Algerine, in a grand military spectacle, *The French Spy*, the heroine of which, Mathilde de Grammont, "a dumb lady assuming the character of

Pierre Graziot, a cadet of the Lancers, and Omar Almorid, an Honah or inspired Arab boy," was played by Madame Celeste. Of Mr. Keppel's performance the *Tatler* writes: "Mr. Keppel's malicious laugh when he had been baffled in his attempt to stab the General (Mr. Tilbury) was the best thing he did. Does this gentleman pique himself on his ocular intensity?" Altogether the actor's success was not of a very pronounced sort.

In September, 1832, on the eve of her first appearance in New York,—she was to represent Dean Milman's Bianca,—Miss Kemble wrote in her diary: "That washed-out man who failed in London when he acted Romeo with me, is to be my Fazio." The "washed-out" man was, of course, poor Mr. Keppel, who had crossed the Atlantic in the hope of establishing himself as a tragedian in America. At rehearsal he was very nervous and imperfect. At night he was gasping for breath, choking with fright. Miss Kemble writes: "He moved my compassion infinitely; I consoled and comforted him all I could, gave him some of my lemonade to swallow, &c." But his fear was not to be allayed. "It was in vain that I prompted him; he was too nervous to take the word, and made a complete mess of it." Bianca, indeed, became alarmed for her own success, and observed as she left the stage at the end of the first act: "It's all up with me, I can't do anything now." For having to prompt her Fazio, frightened by his fright, annoyed by his forgetting his crossings and positions, utterly unable to work herself into anything like excitement, she thought "the whole thing must necessarily go to pieces." She succeeded, however; for Bianca's best scenes are unincumbered by the presence of Fazio. Mr. Keppel, it may be noted, was not the only cause of trouble. The actress records: "My dresses were very beautiful; but, oh! but, oh! the mosquitoes had made dreadful havoc with my arms which were covered with hills as large and red as Vesuvius in an eruption!"

On the morrow, Mr. Keppel was dismissed by the management. The part of Romeo which had been assigned to him was taken away. "Poor man, I'm sorry for him," wrote Miss Kemble; "my father is to play Romeo with me; I'm sorrier still for that." At this period of his career, Charles Kemble usually appeared as Mercutio. "Poor Mr. Keppel! What a funny passion he had, by the by, for going down on his knees. In Fazio, at the end of the judgment scene, when I was upon mine, down he went upon his, making the most absurd, devout-looking *vis-à-vis* I ever beheld. In the last scene, too, when he ought to have been going off to execution, down he went again upon his knees, and no power on earth could get him up again for Lord knows how long. Poor fellow, he bothered me a good deal, yet I'm sincerely sorry for him." Mr.

Keppel, however, petitioned for another trial, urging the hardness of his case; he had been condemned for no fault of his own; time had not been allowed him to study his part. "My own opinion," wrote Miss Kemble, "of poor Mr. Keppel is, that no power on earth or in heaven can make him act decently; however, of course, we did not object to his trying again." Accordingly, he appeared as Jaffier to the *Pierre* of Charles Kemble and the *Belvidera* of his daughter. Meanwhile he had been writing letters to the papers to convince the public that he was a good actor, throwing out sundry hints ("which seemed amid our way," notes the actress) of injustice, oppression, hard usage, &c.

But Mr. Keppel's Jaffier appears to have been even worse than his Fazio. He looked, we are told, like the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, "with the addition of some devilish red slashes along his thighs and arms." The first scene passed tolerably, "but oh!" writes *Belvidera*, "the next, and the next, and the next to that." It is necessary to quote Miss Kemble at some length: "Whenever he was not glued to my side (and that was seldom), he stood three yards behind me; he did nothing but seize my hand and grapple to it so hard, that unless I had knocked him down (which I felt much inclined to try), I could not disengage myself. In the senate scene, when I was entreating for mercy and *struggling*, as *Ottoway* has it, for life, he was prancing round the stage in every direction, flourishing his dagger in the air. I wish to Heaven I had got up and run away; it would have been natural, and have served him extremely right. In the parting scene,—oh, what a scene it was! Instead of going away from me when he said, 'Farewell, for ever!' he stuck to my skirts, though in the same breath that I adjured him, in the words of my part, 'Not to leave me,' I added, aside, 'Get away from me, oh *do*!' When I exclaimed, 'Not one kiss at parting,' he kept embracing and kissing me like mad; and when I ought to have been pursuing him, and calling after him. 'Leave thy dagger with me!' he hung himself up against the wing, and remained dangling there for five minutes. I was half-crazy . . . I prompted him constantly, and once after struggling in vain to free myself from him, was obliged, in the middle of my part, to exclaim: 'You hurt me dreadfully, Mr. Keppel!' He clung to me, cramped me, cramped me,—dreadful!" Finally, Miss Kemble declared to the management her fixed resolve, come what might, not to go upon the stage again with Mr. Keppel for a hero. At the end of the play, however, he was duly called before the curtain by the audience and rewarded with applause.

There is little further chronicled concerning Mr. Keppel. But the brief mention of him in the "*Autobiography of William Jerdan*,"

1852, may, perhaps, be worth reproducing. Mr. Jerdan was some-while the tenant of Cromwell Cottage, Old Brompton. Several of his neighbours, he says, were "noticeable people." Among these were Blanchard, the comedian, and a Mrs. Hedgeland, "better known as Isabella Kelly, the authoress of some popular novels, and the mother of Sir Fitzroy Kelly," then described as a very smart boy. A younger son "equally attractive in a smaller way" became enamoured of the stage. Subsequently, "under the assumed name of Keppel," he tried his fortune on the boards, both here and in America, essaying the part of Romeo. "His person was small, but his proportions and countenance were well suited to the part of the devoted Italian lover; nor were his endowments of a mediocre order; but fortune did not smile upon him. . . . After suffering great mortification he died prematurely with an almost broken heart." As a memorial of the luckless actor, Jerdan prints a letter from him relative to a benefit he was about to take at the Queen's Theatre, "his first appeal to a London public." Poor Mr. Keppel writes: "Any influence you will use on my behalf, on this occasion, I shall most gratefully remember; and with your numerous connexions you have amply the power . . . the pit of our house is the most material part of it, and if I fail at all, it is there I fear. . . . I will enclose you any number of tickets you think you can dispose. . . . Waylett has promised to play for me, although her own benefit is advertised as her last night," &c. &c. The letter bears no date: it was probably written in 1830 or 1831.

A PLEA FOR PANTOMIME.

BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

IT may appear to many, at first sight, that a plea for pantomime at the present moment is a work of supererogation. "Pantomime, indeed!" I think I hear some saying. "What need to plead for pantomime when we have so much of it already?" And it is, of course, impossible to deny that the reign of pantomime of a certain kind is about as extensive as it can be. It is true that of recent years it has not flourished quite so brilliantly as usual in London, but it is equally true that it has figured every Christmas at nearly every theatre in the provinces. It is also undeniable that pantomime, as we have it now, has various qualities to recommend it. It is something that with the profits which result from it the

managers are able to make room for performances of a more elevating but less popular character. It is something, also, that children have an opportunity of witnessing in pantomime stage scenes which at their worst do not descend to the indelicacies of opera-bouffe. A pantomime, again, must be very bad indeed which does not yield a certain amount of innocent gratification to the ordinary playgoer, on whom, for the time being, the charms of comedy or tragedy, of farce or melodrama, may have palled. If pantomime does nothing else, it at least affords relief from the tension of "the higher drama," and its very absurdity is a thing for which we should be grateful. It has the merit, if it is worth anything at all, of being bright and lively—bright with pretty scenery and gorgeous dresses, and lively with excruciating puns and "catching" music. When, then, I come forward with a plea for pantomime, it is not with the intention either of denouncing what we have, or of weeping over its decline and fall. My plea is merely that something more may be made of it than is made at present—that advantage may be taken of the public's evident partiality for this sort of entertainment in order to bring it to a higher level and render it capable of giving more genuine and complete enjoyment.

And, first of all, as to the subjects of the pantomimes. Most of them obtain their titles from popular nursery stories, and many of them follow out those stories with a fair amount of regularity and strictness. It is to the honour of one famous pantomime writer, at any rate, that he sticks closely to his text, and refrains from confusing and irritating his audience by jumbling together two or three incongruous and incompatible fables. It is to be wished that Mr. Blanchard's admirable example were more widely and thoroughly followed than it is. Too often, pantomimes are a mere farrago of mingled narratives, a perfect hotchpot of muddled themes and characters. It is possible, of course, to show considerable ingenuity in the intermingling of various fairy legends, and I don't say that in all cases the effect is in every way displeasing. I do say, however, that to succeed in compilation of the kind a man must have exceptional capacity for the work, and that, as a rule, it is better to leave the single legend chosen in its original and unadorned simplicity. The children, I feel sure, are all the more delighted, and I don't believe their elders are annoyed. On the other hand, there is something absolutely distressing in the efforts made by certain pantomime concoctors to deface and otherwise disfigure an old story, which had a meaning, doubtless, in its primitive shape, but which has none whatever in the new form or forms into which it has been moulded for the nonce.

And if the subject of a pantomime should be straightforward and simple, the treatment of that subject should be equally simple and straightforward. There is too great a tendency among pantomime writers to overload their dialogue with political or local allusions of a character quite foreign to the circumstances. An occasional allusion of the kind, brought in where it is germane to the matter on hand, or where it can by any stroke of wit be possibly connected with it, is of course legitimate—in fact, enjoyable. But this is a very different thing from the set speeches and obviously lugged-in “lines” which are continually being fired off at our Christmas audiences. These are tedious enough when witty; when—which is generally the case—they are both dull and vulgar they become intolerable. And so again with the songs which so plentifully interlard these compositions. Where they arise naturally out of the situation, they are, of course, defensible, not to say exceedingly agreeable; there are, indeed, few things more agreeable in pantomime than the occurrence of airs which fit in exactly with the situations, and affect one almost like so many strokes of humour. But this, again, is very different from the too prevalent habit of thrusting into our pantomimes a series of the most recent music-hall ditties, fitted either with the original words or with lines which rival them in bad taste or absolute indecorum. The introduction of such ditties gives to the whole performance a vulgarity which cannot but have the very worst effect upon the public mind, and especially upon the minds of the young people for whom pantomime is supposed specially to be concocted. I would also offer my humble protest against the further habit of interrupting the action of a pantomime by the interpolation of special performances by acrobats or “wonderful dogs,” or small “sensations” of a similar character—“sensations” which are almost invariably out of tone with the rest of the piece, and only tend to make it dreary in the extreme. The stereotyped ballet is generally forced into pantomime with quite sufficient incongruity without our resorting to the extreme measure of “character” entertainments by a variety of miscellaneous “talent.”

Much, again, might be done for the benefit of pantomime if managers were less fond than they are of recruiting their “casts” from the ranks of music-hall “artistes,”—individuals who, in their sphere, are no doubt frequently inoffensive and occasionally really clever, but who are apt, when on the boards of a high-class theatre, to import into their proceedings the arts which have made them acceptable to low-class audiences. This is the more natural on their part that (as I pointed out) they find the pantomime for which they are engaged already largely indebted to the songs they

have been singing in "the halls"; and, in singing those songs, they are hardly to be blamed if they infuse into them something of the "chic" and "go" which have made them so popular elsewhere. The fault really lies with the persons in authority who go to the music-halls for pantomime performers, but who, I am glad to think, have year by year the less excuse for behaving in that manner. It has now become quite common for legitimate artists to take part in pantomime performances. Leading comedians think nothing of accepting engagements for the purpose, and vocalists of acknowledged eminence do not think it derogatory to their dignity to do likewise, nor is there any reason why they should. Pantomime, in its essence, is a genuine form of art, and is worthy of the best energies of the best artists. If it is far from holding now the position to which it is entitled, this is partly owing to the former unwillingness of dramatic artists to devote themselves to it, and to the persistency with which managers sought for its exponents in the music-halls. Let us hope that artists and managers will both come to see more and more clearly that pantomime has a right to better treatment from them than it has generally received in days gone by.

These, then, are the chief points of my plea for pantomime:— That the subjects of librettos should be clear and simple; that those subjects should be treated simply and clearly, with a minimum of topical allusions, an absence of vulgar ditties, and no interruption at the hands of "specialties;" and that legitimate artists, rather than music-hall "stars," should be secured for its representation. Then, and not till then, can we hope to see pantomime taking its proper place among theatrical performances. On the one hand, it must be recognised that pantomime is a due and proper branch of art, and that it calls for due and proper treatment on the part both of authors and of artists; and on the other hand, it must be remembered that pantomime, though mainly supported by the general public, is in theory intended for the younger portions of that public, and should be especially adapted for their tastes. We should then have no such coarseness of action or such vulgarity of speech as we have too often at the present day; pantomimes would not be given up to horse-play and to tawdriness, as they are too often at this moment; the fun would then be genuine and the sentiment pure; a fine old legend would tell its own simple story and carry with it its old simple lessons; the eye would be gratified by all that was chaste, the ear by all that was harmonious. The whole performance would be one which, whilst it refreshed the jaded intellects of the seniors, would fill with beauty the unstained imagination of the young. Pantomime might do, in fact, what

burlesque, extravaganza, opera-bouffe can never do ; and that it has not done so in the past is no reason why it should not do so in the future.

OBJECTIONS TO STATE AID.

BY HENRY PEAT.

THE growth of public interest in the stage, observable during the last few years, has naturally been accompanied by a longing for improvement, which is gradually finding more and more distinct utterance. While there has of late been an almost total abolition of the pernicious "star" system at some of our most successful theatres, the hardly less pernicious system of long runs has attained larger dimensions than ever, and has become a source of much disquietude to all intelligent lovers of the art of acting. Experience proves that, with phenomenal exceptions, managers will not allow artistic considerations to prevail over their commercial interests ; nor, indeed, can they be expected to do so. Where, then, is a remedy to be found for that which is generally admitted to be a sore impediment to the desired improvement in the English stage ? It has been suggested that the State should establish and endow a national theatre, which, being conducted on high principles, and being independent of pecuniary considerations, could discard those mischievous practices which are the bane of private management. Now, it seems to me that the hopes of reform based upon this ground are visionary, or, at least, destined to no early fulfilment. The inveterate prejudice against theatrical entertainments in a large section of the community would suffice to prevent any Ministry from bringing forward such a scheme ; and one can fancy the outcry that would be raised at the very proposal, the denunciations which would ring from the pulpit over the length and breadth of the land, and the strict mandates which would issue from constituency after constituency to members who would unhesitatingly obey the call to vote against the measure. But, assuming these difficulties to have been overcome, how would the State theatre work ? In considering this question, one's thoughts naturally turn to the *Théâtre Français*, the most widely known of all the many subsidised theatres of Europe. That famous institution, which has stood firm throughout all the political convulsions which have rent France from time to time, is now, perhaps, more prosperous than at any previous period of its history, owing, in a great measure, to the artistic taste and sound judgment of its present manager, M. Perrin. Nowadays, the *Français* is the most attractive of all the Paris

theatres, but those who have visited it in the later days of Napoleon III. will remember the melancholy aspect which the great house used then to present, and the half-empty benches to which the comedians of his Imperial Majesty had too frequently to play. Sad days for the *Maison de Molière* when personal attractions combined with laxity of morals opened its doors to more than one favourite of a corrupt court! Such evils, not unprecedented in the brilliant annals of the house, are, it may be hoped, at an end, and those who attentively observed the additions which M. Perrin has from time to time made to his company know that he has always been guided in his choice by a desire to promote the highest interests of art. An English State theatre would not be exposed to the immoral influences to which allusion has been made, but the action of English Governments in matters appertaining to art has not been such as to inspire one with great confidence in official taste and discrimination. The recent history of the *Théâtre Français* suffices to show how much the beneficial effects of State aid depend upon the aims and exertions of the manager for the time being, and the mode in which Government appointments are made in our country, where, except in the case of places open to competition, interest too often prevails over merit, renders it far from probable that the highest considerations would guide the Government in the all-important selection of the first manager of a newly-established national theatre. One would not be surprised to find the post allotted to some well-connected man who had failed to make his way in any regular career, and to whom the arts of the place-hunter were more familiar than the requirements of the stage. Then the company would probably be composed to a great extent of actors and actresses whose fame was on the decline, and who would move heaven and earth to get snug berths in the national establishment. There would probably be found in the company many a worn-out actor of the so-called legitimate school, who had mouthed and ranted himself into a kind of reputation, and who would now be secured the privilege of making a painful display of his decaying powers before an audience too good-natured to recognise the senile incapacity of an old favourite. Many grave mistakes, made in the incomparably more serious duty of filling judicial seats, occur to one in considering this subject, and the glaring nepotism which has cast discredit upon a newly-created office intended by the Legislature to play an important part under the new system of judicature is no isolated scandal in the history of Government appointments. When such things are done in matters universally admitted to be of the highest importance, and where the patronage is entrusted to men with special knowledge of the particular department in which the

appointment is made, what could be expected of Government action in a matter generally considered of comparatively slight importance and in which the authorities would have no experience or traditions to guide them? In France, where the State has for centuries subsidised the stage, succeeding Ministers of Fine Arts have not always been happy in the exercise of their power over the theatres; and at the present moment the second national theatre of Paris, the Odéon, is a striking instance of the possibility of a State-aided manager enjoying the privileges without fulfilling the duties of his post. At that misused theatre the "long-run" system is rampant, and while the letter of the contract with the State is formally fulfilled by the occasional performance of classical works at Sunday *matinées* and by the production each year of two or three insignificant one-act pieces by young authors, its spirit is grossly violated, and it is no uncommon thing for one play to occupy the boards of the Odéon for one or two hundred consecutive evenings. When such a thing is possible in Paris, where the theatre is far more highly, and infinitely more generally, esteemed than in England, what must we not be prepared for in the case of an English State theatre?

Are we, then, to rest satisfied with the present state of things? Are our leading actors and actresses to continue to play but one part each season, dwarfing their powers by a repetition which becomes almost mechanical, instead of developing them by frequent change of character, which would render the faculties of the artiste more supple, and enable him, in resuming an old rôle, to improve the impersonation by the light of subsequent study and reflection? The system which allows such perfect specimens of English acting as the Galatea of Mrs. Kendal, the Portia of Miss Ellen Terry, and the Louis XI. of Mr. Irving to disappear from the stage after the first long run, and be no more seen, except, perchance, in the course of a provincial tour, is a system so faulty that *res ipsa loquitur* in favour of reform. At a theatre conducted on the same plan as the Français, impersonations of such excellence as those just mentioned would, after the first long run—if one may apply the hateful term to a series of performances broken by at least three off-nights in each week—become part of the regular repertory, and the public would from time to time have opportunities of renewing their acquaintance with what had originally afforded them so much intellectual enjoyment; while the artiste would resume the old rôle with a mind refreshed and strengthened by the varied studies and efforts of the interval. Reasons are above suggested why no faith should be put in State aid for the purpose of effecting the much-to-be-desired change of system. Might not the remedy be found in the association of men of wealth and artistic

taste, whose autoeratic government of a theatre, which need not be less national because unconnected with the State, would be free from many of the evils and perils of State management, and would more resemble that exercised by the Duke of Meiningen, with such satisfactory results, over his famous theatre ?

MORE SKETCHES OUT OF THE LIFE OF A GREAT SINGER.*

BY RICHARD MANSFIELD.

I AM afraid that Madame Rudersdorff was at times more feared than beloved by her colleagues. In proof of this a strange incident occurred on the stage of one of the provincial towns. The opera for the evening was *Lucretia Borgia*, with Madame Rudersdorff in the title-rôle. It was a part in which she greatly excelled, and in which her ability as an actress and her power as a dramatic singer found full scope. If I remember rightly, Signor —— was the conductor, and the cast included, amongst others, another great prima donna of the day and Mr. P——. *Lucretia Borgia* has to appear on the scene in a towering rage. Madame Rudersdorff, as was customary with her, worked herself up to the necessary pitch behind the scenes, and when she flew on to the stage she was indeed terrible to behold. So, at least, thought Mr. P——, for in answer to her burst of passion (which takes the form of recitative) not a note could the thoroughly-frightened tenor produce. So life-like was Madame Rudersdorff's representation that Mr. P——, believing himself really in great peril, could remember neither music nor words. In vain Madame Rudersdorff repeated the last few bars of the recitative, the tenor opened his mouth but he could neither cry out nor sing. In vain Madame Rudersdorff and Madame —— interpolated some recitative of their own composition, and in Italian besought him to take courage and go on. In vain the orchestra repeated the cue. Not a sound from the terror-stricken tenor. The opera was at a standstill. Fortunately the conductor (a celebrated composer, now living) was equal to the occasion, and the orchestra played what the tenor should have sung. After the curtain had fallen, Signor —— made his way behind the scenes: "What on earth do you mean," said he, "by making such a mess of it?" "How the d—— could I tell," replied the crestfallen tenor, "that Madame Rudersdorff was going to be in such a rage?"

* In the previous instalment of these sketches, for the Emperor "Franz" read the Emperor "Ferdinand."

Madame Rudersdorff was wont to be as good as her word. Whilst on a tour in Ireland the tenor fell ill, and was replaced by a youthful aspirant to operatic honours of exceedingly diminutive stature and of mean capacity, whose birthplace was Dublin, and whose friends had engaged the manager. But the little man could neither sing nor act, and his conceit was, strange to say, as great as his ignorance. Madame Rudersdorff soon lost patience with him, and determined to rid the company of this incubus. The opportunity soon occurred and in Dublin. It doesn't much signify what opera was being performed, but Madame Rudersdorff wore a very long dress. The unhappy tenor could in no way avoid this very long dress; in whatever position he placed himself, somehow or other he always found himself standing upon Madame Rudersdorff's train. He would no sooner disentangle himself and seize the opportunity to strike a picturesque attitude, when lo, he beheld the pale pink shimmer of Madame Rudersdorff's robe beneath his feet. Madame was exasperated beyond all endurance, her finest effects were spoiled by the persistent awkwardness of the youthful aspirant. "If you step on my dress again, I give you my word, I will trip you up!" The light tenor fled in horror to another part of the stage. Again he was compelled to approach in order to sing in a trio—a few bars, and behold he was firmly, but unconsciously, planted on the dress once more. Madame Rudersdorff seized her train with both her hands and stepped swiftly on one side. The youthful aspirant's legs were drawn from under him and he measured his length on the boards. Only those who have played before an Irish audience can form any idea of the effect this produced in the house. In vain he gesticulated wildly, in vain he endeavoured to sing, he actually attempted a protest—the result was only shriek after shriek of laughter. It is not necessary to add that the very light tenor never appeared again in Dublin.

I think I have mentioned elsewhere that Madame Rudersdorff sojourned during the earlier period of her life, and, indeed, before her appearance on the stage, at the court of the famed Duchess Sophia of Baden, with whom she was a great favourite. It was, indeed, with the assistance and consent of the Duchess Sophia that Madame Rudersdorff was enabled to study under the great maestro, the Chevalier Micheroux, the master of Clara Novello, Catherine Hayes, and Pasta. Madame was in the habit of recounting many interesting anecdotes in connection with her life at the Baden court. Prince Napoleon (Plon-Plon) was at that time in Baden-Baden, and was much enamoured of Mdle. Rudersdorff. He went so far as to bring the regimental band to serenade her, and was incarcerated by the duchess, who was a very severe *disciplinarienne*,

for this breach of martial etiquette. Many years later Madame Rudersdorff and the Prince met in Paris, when Napoleon III. was on the throne. "Ah," said the Prince, "I remember you very well, madame, for you had me locked up once."

The Duchess Sophia was a very good housekeeper—some said she practised economy to the extent of parsimony. Certain it is that Miss Greville and Madame Rudersdorff used to beg the champagne from the major-domo for the King of Wurtemberg on the occasion of his visit to the Baden court. When her royal highness had visitors, her favourite refreshment, in the shape of a hard-boiled egg in a *tasse de bouillon*, was invariably handed round. Not to partake of it was to incur the displeasure of the duchess. When the bluff old King of Wurtemberg arrived, the bouillon with the egg made its appearance. It required practice to eat the egg with a spoon, it was so very hard and so very slippery. The king could not manage it; it was pitiable to see him driving the egg round and round the bowl with his spoon. Mdlle. Rudersdorff, who was behind his chair, ventured to advise him. "Your majesty must not do it like that," she whispered; "your majesty should thrust your spoon *suddenly* into the egg; it is no good shilly-shallying with it." "*Danke schön*," said his majesty, "*ach, es ist ja doch gar zu schrecklich!*" Summoning up all his courage, the king made a dive at the egg, the spoon slipped, and the egg flew out of the cup and fell into the Duchess Sophia's lap. The king roared with laughter, and the duchess looked highly incensed.

DU BÉRANGER.

RONDEAU.

BY EVELYN JERROLD.

BANVILLE est fin ; Gautier est maître-ès-rimes ;
Baudelaire a des vers comme des crimes,
Savants, méchants, et ténébreux et froids.
Hugo l'on sait est roi parmi les rois,
Cher autocrate aux édits magnanimes !

Coppée exhale en vain des airs sublimes,
Cela sent trop le lent travail des limes ;
Ah, qu'on nous dise encor pour une fois
Du Béranger !

Assez d'aigris, de cynisme, et de cimes !
Poëtereaux que l'on coiffe en victimes,
Laissez le rythme et songez à la voix !
Reviens, reviens, franc chansonnier Gaulois,
Rend-nous vingt ans comme lorsque nous dîmes :
Du Béranger !

Portraits.

XIV.—MR. BURNAND.

LET us on this occasion assume the power of Asmodeus, and, taking our stand upon the steeple of Bloomsbury Church, cause the roof of a house on the east side of Russell-square to disappear. In a room near the top, see, one of the most industrious men of letters of our time is at work. The apartment is simply but comfortably furnished; the many books and manuscripts it contains are neatly and methodically arranged, and on the mantel-piece, sad to state, a large number of pipes of various sizes and material may be seen. It is not easy to say what Mr. Burnand is writing, so many are the walks of literature which he pursues. He may be engaged upon an original comedy, a dramatic criticism or a humorous sketch for *Punch*, a novel or a burlesque, an adaptation of a French play or a stern protest against the unjust treatment which dramatists of creative power experience at the hands of London managers (see page 14). Perhaps he takes a deeper interest in his *Punch* work than in any other, but it is none the less true that from his early life he has had what may fairly be described as a passion for the drama. In his sixteenth year, then being an Eton boy, he played in *Guy Fawkes Day* and *Bombastes*. During his first term at Cambridge he gave amateur performances in his rooms, started the Amateur Dramatic Club, and enriched its repertoire with *Villikins and his Dinah*, *Alonzo the Brave*, &c. It is right to state that some of these pieces have kept the stage—provincially—ever since. His first contribution to the London stage was *Dido*, brought out at the St. James's Theatre in 1860. Next, in conjunction with Mr. Montagu Williams, he wrote *B.B.*, in which Robson played the Benicia Boy. Both pieces succeeded, but brought little or no grist to the author's mill. Mr. Burnand, however, did another farce for Robson; also an extravaganza and the burlesque of *Fair Rosamond*. Meanwhile he furnished Mr. Wigán with the *Isle of St. Tropez*, and provided Mr. Toole with *A Turkish Bath* at the Adelphi. Devoting himself for a period to the Royalty he wrote *Ixion*, in which Miss Cavendish made her first appearance in London, and the burlesque of *Black-Eyed Susan*, which alone brought him £2,000 ("O si sic omnia!" he murmured as the last accounts were settled). *Military Billy Taylor*, his third Royalty



THE THEATRE N^o 7 NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE

Justus

F. C. Brumand

burlesque, was by no means so well received. Mr. Burnand next wrote several dramas, such as the *Deal Boatman*, founded partly upon *Poor Jack* and partly upon *Little Em'ly*; *The Turn of the Tide*, founded upon *The Morals of Mayfair*, and *Archie Lovell*, founded upon another of Mrs. Edwards's novels. The second of these pieces derived considerable strength from the acting of Miss Hodson, Mr. Vezin, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Matthews. In his *Madame Berliot's Ball*, Miss Cavendish first developed her capacity for comedy-acting, and his *Humbug* gave Miss Fowler the chance of making her first bow to a London audience. In 1875 Mr. Burnand opened the Opéra Comique with an original comedy from his own pen, *Proof Positive*. This play did not long remain on the bills, principally, we suspect, in consequence of the shortcomings of the so-called light comedian who undertook the chief part. For this disappointment Mr. Burnand had some consolation in the success of his *Artful Cards*, a version of an unsuccessful Palais Royal farce. Let us now turn to the pieces which he has written for the Strand Theatre. *Family Ties* was founded on *Aux Crochets d'un Gendre*, but was notable for the introduction of an original character entirely new to the English stage, an Anglo-Frenchman, supposed to be a resident in England, and devoted to sport. This was written for M. Marius, by whom it was admirably played. *Our Club*, which followed, is an entirely original comedy, and was eminently successful. It was written as an answer to the complaint of there being in 1878 no English authors who could compete with the French in ingenuity of construction. *Our Club* aims at being nothing more than a light comedy, such as might be played at the Vaudeville, Paris, and above the level of the farcical Palais Royal pieces. This comedy was written to order, and the characters were to suit the peculiarities of the Strand company. It divided the evening with the same writer's *Diplunacy*, which so successfully caricatured *Diplomacy* as to run the entire season. Almost all the pieces written by Mr. F. C. Burnand for the German Reeds are small comedies, carefully constructed and instinct with life and character, as, for example, *My Aunt's Secret*, in which Mr. Arthur Cecil made his first real artistic success. It is the fate of dramatic authors to be utterly lost sight of by the public, who are content to make themselves acquainted with the title of a successful play and the names of popular actors. Therefore, it is rare for a dramatic author to be so well known as a novelist or an essayist. The anonymous journalist has still less chance, and but for the publication of *Happy Thoughts* in a separate form Mr. Burnand might have been only known to a literary circle as a contributor to *Punch*.

Fenilleton.

A MYSTERY OF PARIS.

By CHARLES F. PEMBERTON.

IN the winter of 1788-9 a gentleman of middle-age was nearly knocked down on the Pont Neuf by a horse driven by Mdle. Contat, the piquante soubrette of the Comédie Française. "Sir," the actress said, sharply pulling up, "what do you mean by running against a horse in this manner?" "I beg your pardon, Madame," was the reply, "but I really think the horse ran against me." "Impossible, sir," rejoined the actress. "Then, madame," said the unfortunate gentleman, "perhaps you will confess we were both in fault." "No, sir," said the lady, "I will confess nothing of the sort. My horse is perfectly under control. Besides, I called *Gare!* and you never looked round." "Truly, madame," remarked her opponent gracefully, "you have more need to say '*Gare*' now, when I do look round; the danger is in looking at you."

Not long after this, while wondering who the stranger was, the actress received a note. It was as follows:—"The gentleman who lately had the honour of a moment's conversation with the modern Thalia on the Pont Neuf requests to know whether she can devote a leisure hour to the rehearsal of a piece in two acts, about to be produced at the Comédie Italienne, in which the writer of this note is greatly interested. Signed Henry."

Henry? Nobody knew M. Henry. Determined to clear up the mystery, Mdle. Contat repaired to the Comédie Italienne, and inquired for the name of the two-act piece in rehearsal. In reply she was told there were several two-act pieces in preparation. "But," said the actress, "which of them is written by M. Henry?" "None," was the reply. Dezède, the composer, here appeared. "Ah, madame," he said, with a bow, "I have a most particular favour to request. I want you to assist us in the rehearsal of a first act." "The author of your piece is named Henry?" asked the actress. "No, madame, that is not his name." "Is he not very good-looking?" "Very." "He has fine eyes, an open countenance, and a military air." "He has." "The very man," said Mademoiselle. "But is this his first production? He is not a very

young beginner. He must be between fifty and sixty." "Oh, no," replied Dezède, "he cannot be more than five-and-thirty." "Nonsense," said Mademoiselle, "I would lay you a wager he is nearly sixty." "Well, madame," said Dezède, "I will not dispute the point; but if he is as old as you state he certainly disguises his age admirably. Here he comes."

As the composer spoke, a gentleman a little over thirty years of age entered. He is described as "a person of elegant air and figure, with a handsome and intellectual countenance." "Ma foi!" exclaimed Contat, "I find I must give some explanation of my conduct. If it be not strictly decorous for a lady to go in search of a gentleman, what will be thought of a principal actress of the Théâtre Français going in quest of an author?" And with a smile she produced the note signed "Henry," which was passed from hand to hand. As soon as the stranger caught sight of it he uttered an exclamation of joy. "Henry!" he ejaculated with some emotion, "ever kind, noble, and generous." "And to me ever unknown," said Contat, in a tone of playful indifference. "Unknown!" cried the stranger in surprise, "why, all the world knows him." "Nay, sir," said the actress, "there is at least one person in the world who is not in the secret. That one is myself. For pity's sake do tell me who he is, or I shall die of curiosity." "Is it possible, madame," said the stranger, "that you are not aware that this note is written by Prince Henry of Prussia?" "The brother of Frederick the Great?" "The same—Count Oels." "I breathe again," said the actress. "It is well he is the brother of a king, and a hero into the bargain. I pardon him for the sake of the *coup de théâtre*." "And for the sake of his recommendation, madame," resumed the author, "I venture to hope that you will favour *me*." Then, drawing the actress aside, he explained the nature of his position.

Les Deux Pages, the piece in question, was intended as a tribute to the memory of Frederick, and, like the *Partie de Chasse de Henri IV.*, was of the anecdotal class. The chief incident had an historical foundation. The conqueror of Silesia one day rang his bell, but no one came. He opened the door of the apartment, and then saw the page asleep in an armchair and a note protruding from his pocket. The king softly drew out the letter and read it. It was from the youth's mother, acknowledging the receipt of a portion of his salary, which he had sent to relieve her necessities, and invoking a blessing upon his head. The king replaced the letter in the page's pocket with a purse of ducats, went back to his apartment, and rang the bell sharply. In another moment the page presented himself. "Have you been sleeping?" asked the king sternly: "I have rung the bell twice." The page endeavoured to

excuse himself, and in his embarrassment happened to put his hand into his pocket, and mechanically drew out the purse. "Ah, sire!" he moaned, dropping on his knees, "somebody is conspiring to ruin me. I know nothing of this purse." "No matter, my good lad," said the king, "Heaven often sends us good luck in our sleep. Forward the purse to your mother with my regards, and tell her that I will provide for her as well as you." It was upon this incident that the piece was founded. The other page was a light-hearted youth, created for the sake of dramatic contrast. *Les Deux Pages* was in two acts; the first showing the persecution to which the mother and sister are subjected, at an inn near Berlin, by an unfeeling creditor. The hostess of the inn was pretty and piquant; Madame Dugazon, however, had refused the part as beneath her talents, and the actress to whom it had been intrusted would not be able to play it well. Now, if the first act were not efficiently performed the piece was doomed, and the author hoped that Mdlle. Contat would hear a rehearsal and try to induce Madame Dugazon to represent the hostess.

"Well," said the actress when he had finished, "what victories has Prince Henry won?" The author, not a little astonished at the question, mentioned Breslau, Dresden, Torgau, Kolin, Prague, and Bohemia. "Well," resumed Contat, "all these are nothing in comparison with the battles which must be fought at the Comédie Italienne to attain the object which the Prince desires. The attempt to take a part from an actress who has possession of it, and force it back upon one who has rejected it, is a bold enterprise, demanding a degree of courage and good generalship worthy of Prince Henry himself. But, unfortunately, it is impossible." "In this case," said the author, deeply disappointed, "I have no alternative but to withdraw the play." "Stay," said the actress, "let us have the rehearsal. Perhaps something may be suggested." The rehearsal was accordingly proceeded with. Contat listened with attention and in silence. The author, anxious to discover her thoughts, earnestly watched her face, but to no purpose. At the close of the rehearsal he advanced to her, expecting to hear an unfavourable judgment. But a pleasant surprise was in store for him. "When," she said, "you see Prince Henry, inform him that his wish shall be complied with."

The actress, in fact, had fully appreciated the merits of *Les Deux Pages*, and spared no exertions to have it transferred from the Comédie Italienne to the Comédie Française. This end attained, she resolved to play the hostess herself, and that Fleury, then an actor of some standing at the theatre, should have the principal part. The author wished Dugazon to represent the king, but Contat, whose word, of course, was law, thought Fleury the better

man. For some time, however, she contrived to keep him in ignorance of her intentions, with what success we shall presently show. The actor was one day speaking to her in the greenroom of his professional progress, and expressing a wish to appear in an original part. "I want," he said, "a character which shall not fall into the line of any of our present generation of actors—which would not bring me into comparison with my betters; a character of such an original cast that the public would be astonished to see me attempt it; a character, in fine, like Suzanne, which raised you at once to such well-merited distinction." "But, remember, Fleury," said the lady, "that I had no objection to the waiting-maid's cap and apron; your pride would rebel against the footman's livery." "Well," was the answer, "I do confess I have a strong antipathy to wearing a livery." "Shall I propose a character for you?" "With all my heart." "How would you like to act a prince?" "I have never been accustomed to fill so high a rank; but still, if that be the only difficulty—" "Do you think you could command a hundred thousand men?" "A hundred thousand! There will be many refractory subjects among them, I fear; but with Mdle. Contat's recommendation—" "Fleury," said the lady, "I suspect you have some idea of what I am going to tell you." He had, and smilingly admitted as much. "Now," he said, "that all is decided, let me express my gratitude as a friend, and embrace you in my character of king." "Then," she said laughingly, "you know that I am to play your humble subject the hostess." Fleury kissed her with so much ardour that Dugazon, who was gossiping in a corner with a youth named Joseph Francis Talma, looked round. "Did anything fall?" he asked slyly. "Yes, yes," was the jubilant reply, "a bolt has fallen on your head, and a crown on mine."

Les Deux Pages was received two months before the Easter holidays, and consequently Fleury had time to devote much attention to the character. The author himself and an officer in the suite of Prince Henry joined with others in furnishing information; Saint Fal, a comrade, provided him with an excellent portrait of Frederick, by Rumberg. His memoirs, from which this story is taken, exhibit a conspicuous instance of industrious and thoughtful study. For two months he sought to imbue himself with the idea that his apartments were at Potsdam instead of Paris; to go to bed, rise, take his meals, and move and speak in the full persuasion that he was Frederick II. Every morning he equipped himself in the military dress he had ordered, and, seating himself before his looking-glass, endeavoured to paint his face to a resemblance of the portrait, for he was fully sensible of the greatness of his opportunity. The character was quite of an original stamp,

nothing of the kind had previously been attempted. "It was my task," he says, "to represent a man who had just closed a wonderful career, and on whom the eyes of all Europe had been anxiously fixed. Few things are better calculated to ensure popularity on the stage than an historical name of recent date. If the actor be capable of embodying even a tolerable resemblance to his model, he establishes in the minds of his audience a sort of association between himself and the eminent person he represents. It is a resurrection which involuntarily creates interest. The stage representation of a hero, dead as it were but yesterday, unavoidably produces a powerful impression. The actor performs the functions of the Pythoness, and the evocation can scarcely fail to establish his reputation."

At length, in the Easter period, *Les Deux Pages* was brought out. The flower of the Comédie Française was engaged in the representation. The well-known names of Fleury, Contat, Dazincourt, Bellecourt, Raucourt, and Pétit appeared in the cast. Seldom had such an audience assembled in the theatre. The Dukes of Orleans and Nivernois, the literary coteries over which they reigned, and several deputies of the States-General were present; while, half-concealed in the box of the Marshal de Beauvan, Prince Henry himself was to be seen. In another box sat a man whose immense head and intensely ugly face could not but attract notice—Gabriel Honoré de Riquetti, Count de Mirabeau. Finally, the pit presented a formidable array of critical judges. When the curtain rose a deep silence fell upon the house. Supported by the combined talents of Dazincourt and Contat, the first act went off with great *éclât*. "The latter," we are told, "was irresistibly charming. Her beauty, grace, and vivacity never produced a more fascinating impression, and her singing (for she was truly a delightful singer) gave full effect to some airs which Dezède had composed for the piece. As Frederick entered the silence became even deeper than before; Dazincourt said that he heard the unfolding of a lady's cambric handkerchief. Shortly afterwards, however, the stillness was broken by involuntary applause. "The sentinels," writes the actor, "presented arms to me, and I cast a scrutinizing glance at their martial attitude. To the sentinel on the left I gave a shrug of dissatisfaction, whilst I directed to the other a smile, indicating approbation, perhaps a forthcoming reward. The pit continued unmoved, and I said within myself—my thoughts still directed to the sentinel—'You shall have the cross of merit.' That instant, as though the thought had been a signal, a torrent of applause burst from every part of the theatre. Then, when I turned to speak, silence was again restored, though again frequently inter-

rupted by bursts of approbation;" and the curtain eventually fell on a genuine dramatic triumph.

On the following day the author of the play called at the theatre. He cordially embraced Fleury, apologised for having at first felt any want of confidence in his talents, complimented him on his performance with much liberality, and finally handed him a packet from Prince Henry. "His Highness," he said, "has desired me to present to you this snuff-box, which belonged to the king his brother, for the prince is of opinion that no one knows better how to use it than yourself. His highness directs me to assure you that your acting has fully verified an observation of Frederick the Great himself, namely, that 'Feeling is the main-spring of every great effort!'" A beautifully-executed miniature of the king, surrounded with diamonds, adorned the lid. Nevertheless, the actor did not consider his triumph complete. Mirabeau—the terrible M. de Mirabeau—had not applauded his performance. From the commencement to the conclusion he had apparently remained in one fixed position, his elbow on the front of the box, his head on his hand. "I felt," writes Fleury, "that I would have given all the applause I earned for the suffrage of that one man." But, as the actor afterwards learnt, the orator's ill-humour was due, not to disapproval of the performance, but to his being reminded by the play of his *Histoire Secrète de la Cour de Berlin*; and, consequently, there was nothing to mar the triumph.

And who was the author of *Iles Deux Pages*? the reader asks, no doubt. I am unable to answer the question. The dramatic biographers have thrown no clear light on the point. Dezède was mentioned at one time as the author, but it is authoritatively stated that all he did was to compose the music. Grimm assigns the authorship to Sauvigné, another writer to a certain "Manteufel," and MM. Etienne and Matinville to Faure. But, according to Fleury, who was necessarily well-informed, but who does not think himself at liberty to disclose the secret, each of these surmises is incorrect. The identity of the dramatist is as uncertain as that of Junius; indeed, all that we know about him is that he was "a man of high birth, and descended from one of the sovereign houses of Europe."

En Passant.

BY the death of Mlle. Beatrice, which occurred on the 22nd December, the stage has been deprived of one of its most estimable votaries. Everything she did was characterized by remarkable intelligence and refinement. Her biography reads more like a page of romance than what it really is. Marie Beatrice Binda was born in Italy about forty years ago. Her father, the Chevalier Binda, was for some time the British Consul at Florence and Leghorn, and her mother a granddaughter of the Marquise de Lage de Volude, chief maid of honour to Marie Antoinette. The Chevalier, who in early life had counted Byron among his personal friends, was for many years a political refugee in England, and seems to have passed nearly the whole of his time at Chatsworth and Holland House. In or about 1856 he obtained honourable employment under the Second Empire, but was soon afterwards stricken with paralysis and reduced to comparative poverty. In this emergency his daughter resolved to go on the stage, and, having passed through the ordeal of the Conservatoire with success, appeared at the Odéon, and next at the Vaudeville. Even then she had no ordinary grasp of her art, as is shown by the fact that M. Dumas asked her to play the heroine in his *Ami des Femmes*—an offer which the death of her father, whom she nursed in his last illness with the most daughterly devotion, prevented her from taking advantage of. Madame Binda soon joined her husband in the grave, and from that time, though pressed by the Empress Eugénie to remain in Paris, Mlle. Beatrice made England her home. Her first appearance on the London stage was at the Haymarket Theatre, under the name of Lucchesini, in 1864. Her success was beyond doubt; the engagements which followed brought her both fame and profit, and in 1870 she organized the company which from that time until her death has afforded so much pleasure to playgoers in both town and country. Her death was caused by excessive grief at the loss of a younger sister, although until a comparatively recent period she bravely continued to act. There was a solemn requiem mass in the pro-Catholic Cathedral at Kensington, on the 31st December, for the repose of her soul, and the body now rests near that of the sister alluded to in *Père-la-Chaise*.

THE "King of Pantomime," too, passed away a week before Boxing-day. Mr. W. H. Payne was originally intended for the Stock Exchange, but at an early age joined a company on the Warwickshire "circuit." In 1831, after playing small parts in Birmingham and the East of London, he was engaged for Covent Garden Theatre, and there sustained the art of pantomime at the point to which it had been elevated by Rich and

Grimaldi. It is worthy of note that he was the actor who bore Edmund Kean off the stage on the memorable 25th March, 1833. Thirty or forty years ago the essence of pantomime was dumb-show, and of this art Mr. Payne was a perfect master. In each of his gestures there was an intelligible meaning. His imperturbably serious air in the most comic situations was one of his strongest points. The mask he wore did not entirely cover his face, and the play of his features could be distinctly seen. How irresistibly diverting he was as the ghost-haunted and rat-worried occupant of the *Great Bed of Ware*; as the apprehensive woodcutter in the *Forty Thieves*; as Henry II. in *Fair Rosamond*, and in other pieces too numerous to mention! Both old and young could understand and enjoy such humour as his, and it is much to be regretted that towards the end of his life he should have been compelled to interrupt his eloquent pantomime to talk or sing.

KARL GUTZKOW, the German novelist and dramatist, is also dead. His fame rests chiefly on his novel *Der Zauberer von Rom*; but two of his plays—*Der Königsleutenant*, a comedy, founded on an incident in Goethe's early life, and *Uriel Acarta*, a tragedy—would go far to perpetuate his memory. These works, like his many contributions to periodical literature, are marked by a fiercely anti-religious spirit. He was in fact, one of the "Young Germany" party, a body of writers who between 1830 and 1840 seemed to have concentrated all the revolutionary tendencies of the age in their own persons. The Prussian Government, it may be remembered, suppressed all the things these men had written, and interdicted them from writing again, and on the publication of his *Wally die Zweiflerin*—a bitter attack upon religion, marriage, and the then constitution of society—Gutzkow was imprisoned for some time.

THE quarrel in America between Mdlle. Hawk and Mr. Mapleson reminds us of a curious anecdote of Frederick the Great. There was in Berlin a prima donna who whenever anything or anybody displeased her invariably became too hoarse to sing. One day an opera in her repertory was to be performed. At the appointed hour the manager came forward, and announced that owing to a sore throat she was unable to appear. The audience prepared to leave, but the King rose and commanded them to keep their places, which they wonderingly did. A few minutes afterwards an officer and four dragoons entered the capricious lady's room. "Mademoiselle," quoth the officer, "the King inquires after your health." "The King is very good; I have a sore throat." "His Majesty knows it, and has charged me to take you at once to the military hospital to be cured." Mademoiselle, turning very pale, suggested that they were jesting, but was told that Prussian officers never indulged in such a thing. Before long she found herself in a coach with the four men. "I am a little better now," she faltered out; "I will try to sing." "Back to the theatre," said the officer to the coachman. Mademoiselle thought she had receded too easily. "I shall not be able to sing my best," she said. "I

think not." "And why?" "Because two dragoons in attendance behind the scenes have orders [to carry you off to the military hospital at the least *couac*." Never did the lady sing better.

MANY American journalists have waxed facetious over Mr. Mapleson's threat to imprison Mdle. Hauk. The *World*, for example, fears that it will have either to teach its police reporters music or turn its musical critics loose upon the press-room. Before Colonel Mapleson dies, perhaps, we shall read something like this:—"One of the finest concerts of the season was given on Sunday evening at the Academy; the programme was artistic, and with a few exceptions creditably performed. At 7.30 the police, under command of Captain Williams, took possession of the stage, and Signor Arditì, having been roundly clubbed on the soles of his feet, was necked into the orchestra. Precisely at eight o'clock the Black Maria with Mme. Gerster and the other principal artistes drove up to the stage door. Signor Campobello was brought in from the police-station in an ambulance. The execution of Reményi, notwithstanding his handcuffs, was admirable. When Miss Hauk was placed at the footlights with a stalwart policeman supporting her by a firm grip upon her lace collar, the audience broke into a furor; and although her personal appearance was somewhat defaced by a large bump over her eye, she sang more sweetly than ever, and it was well for her that she did. Some dissatisfaction was manifested from a stockholder's box when a newly-appointed patrolman persisted in clubbing Signor Frapolli when he neglected to take his high notes, because a minion of the law had no notion of time, and his blows interrupted the enjoyment of the fastidious stockholder in question. The sensation of the evening, however, was the appearance of Mme. Gerster, who, although suffering from the loss of her front teeth and with her right arm in a sling, serenely faced the audience."

MDLLE. BERNHARDT is writing a book on her voyages in the air. M. Gustave Nadaud writes to this versatile lady:—

"O Sarah, Sarah, qu'ai-je appris !
 Vous écrivez !—Je vous écris.
 Bref, il ne manque à votre gloire
 Que d'écrire un livre d'histoire,
 De diriger l'Observatoire,
 De régir le Conservatoire.
 Ou de faire un grand opéra.
 Cela viendra, cela viendra.
 Vous pourriez être, chère amie,
 Quatre fois de l'Académie.
 Récapitulons, ô Sarah :
 Vous avez l'art et la nature,
 Vous êtes présente et future ;
 Vous accaparez la sculpture,
 Vous entreprenez la peinture ;
 Vous tenez la littérature ;
 Il n'y manque pas un seul *ture*."

IN playing Hamlet, Mr. Irving, as everybody knows, does not leap into the grave. Is this not against Shakspeare's authority? The following lines, supposed to have been written about 1620, seem to allude to Burbage's impersonation of the Dane :—

On y^e death of y^e famous Actor R. Burbadge.

Hee's gon, and with him what a world are dead.
 Oft have I seene him leape into a grave
 Suiting y^e person (w^{ch} hee us'd to have)
 Of a mad lover, wth so true an eye,
 That there I would have sworne hee meant to dye.

But, as Mr. Furnivall points out, it is, of course, probable—some may say certain—that the lines do not point to the acting of Hamlet, inasmuch as there never could have been any reason in any one's mind for expecting Hamlet to die in Ophelia's grave. True that he asks Laertes,—

Dost thou come heere to whine ;
 To outface me with leaping in her Grave ?
 Be buried quicke with her, and so will I ;

but he at once shows that it is all talk, by adding, four lines after,—

Nay, and thou'lt mouth,
 I'll rant, as well as thou.

Also, if the four Burbage lines following the five above quoted refer to the intended death in the grave, as they seem to do, and not to a later death, the Hamlet allusion is further negated ; for they run thus :—

Oft have I seene him play this part in jest
 So lively, y^t spectators, and the rest
 Of his crewes, whilst hee did but seeme to bleed,
 Amazed, thought hee had bene deade indeed.

MR. EDWIN BOOTH has written the following note to the editor of the *Christian Union*, who requested from him an article on the drama :—
 “On my arrival here I found your favour of 1st instant, but have been prevented from answering it until to-day. Having no literary ability whatever, I must decline your flattering invitation ; nor do I know how to aid the worthy cause you advocate ; could I do so, be assured it should be freely done. My knowledge of the modern drama is so very meagre that I never permit my wife or daughter to witness a play without previously ascertaining its character. This is the method I pursue : I can suggest no other, unless it might be by means of a ‘dramatic censor,’ whose taste or judgment might, however, be frequently at fault. If the management of theatres could be denied to speculators and placed in the hands of actors who value their reputation and respect their calling, the stage would, at least, afford healthy recreation, if not indeed a wholesome stimulus to the exercise of noble sentiments. But while the theatre is permitted to be a mere shop for gain—open to every huckster of immoral gimcracks—there is no other way to discriminate between the pure and base than through the experience of others.”

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE opening of the season at the Lyceum will probably mark an epoch in the history of the English stage. For some time past, as our readers are aware, there has been a movement in favour of establishing a national theatre—that is, of defraying from the public funds the losses which a competent manager might incur by giving thoroughly adequate representations of the master-pieces of dramatic literature, by producing new plays with artistic completeness, and by generally practising art for art's sake. Private enterprise, we suggested some months ago, was not equal to the task; the mere pecuniary difficulty in the way of securing such a company and such a *répertoire* as those of the *Théâtre Français* placed the undertaking wholly beyond the reach of individual effort. Events may prove that in this we were mistaken. *Hamlet* is now being played at the Lyceum with a vigour and completeness heretofore unknown. Mr. Irving, it is clear, is determined to do for the highest forms of the drama what Mrs. Bancroft and Mr. Hare have done for modern comedy, and his success at the outset may be gauged by the statement—by no means lightly uttered—that in all respects the Lyceum is now a worthy rival of the *Théâtre Français* and other subsidized theatres of the Continent. How far this spirited policy will realize the new manager's expectations has yet to be seen, but the hold which he has obtained upon all sections of the playgoing community affords good reason to hope that he will not be disappointed. For some time to come, at any rate, the idea of having a theatre partially supported by the State will fall into abeyance.

Let us at first proceed to speak of the acting. Mr. Irving's *Hamlet* has been so minutely described that it is unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the performance. It remains substantially the same as before, but seems to have gained in clearness of outline, force of expression, and variety of illustrative detail. The actor's peculiarities of action and utterance, too, have been appreciably modified, though more than one critic continues to dwell upon them at such length as to leave himself no space to speak of the beauties by which they are accompanied. To adapt a sarcastic passage in one of Hazlitt's criticisms upon Edmund Kean to the present case, it appears that an ingenious set of persons, having observed certain mannerisms in Mr. Irving, go regularly to the theatre to confirm themselves in this singular piece of sagacity, and, finding that he has not altered since they last saw him, are determined, until such a metamorphosis is effected, not to allow a particle of genius to him, or of taste or common sense to those who are not stupidly blind to everything but his defects. The critic, it seems

to us, should first inquire whether an actor's conception of the character he plays is just, and then to what extent he succeeds in realising it in the performance. Brought to these tests, Mr. Irving's Hamlet is shown to be a singularly fine impersonation. The conception bears evidence of independent study and thought. This Hamlet is of an essentially tender and noble nature, and therefore no more fitted to accomplish the terrible mission confided to him than "a vase of porcelain to hold an oak." The situation in which he is placed subjects him to the highest degree of nervous excitement, but never dethrones his reason. How thoroughly Mr. Irving succeeds in embodying this view need hardly be said. The fate-driven and irresolute prince seems to stand before us in *propria personâ*. The performance, so far from being a mere succession of points, is a consistent and intelligible whole, and abounds in flashes of contagious inspiration. Free from the bonds of tradition, Mr. Irving presents us with a *human* Hamlet, and the realism he imparts to his acting rather intensifies than diminishes the halo of poetry which surrounds the character. It seems strange that such merits should be comparatively lost sight of because in scenes of deep passion the actor betrays some regrettable peculiarities, but so it is. Ophelia is represented by Miss Ellen Terry, who, formerly known as one of our most elegant and *spirituelle* exponents of light comedy, again proves herself to be one of the best emotional actresses on the boards. Here, as in *Olivia*, her performance is a poem in action. Her change of countenance at the first allusion in her presence to Hamlet; her placing a hand upon her brother's shoulder as though to add weight to the counsel given to him by Polonius; her lingering look at the presents as she returned them to the giver; the silent anguish in which she parted from the cherished day-dream of her youth,—all this may be classed with those May-fly glories of the stage which can hardly be perpetuated by literary skill. Her mad scene was robbed of much of its effect on the first night by a slight hoarseness and want of self-possession; now, however, it is the most touching part of the impersonation. In her graceful demeanour and mobile features Miss Terry has great advantages in playing such a part. The King of Mr. Forrester is another noteworthy piece of acting. Not only is every line spoken well and to the point, but his face—except, of course, in the more violent scenes—exhibits the plausible smile to which Hamlet may be supposed to allude. Mr. Cooper wants weight and authority as Laertes, though his excellence in one or two scenes goes far to justify his selection for the part. Horatio, as played by Mr. Swinbourne, is a man who is nearer middle age than youth,—an innovation for which there is sufficient authority in the text. Hamlet, it is certain, is nearly thirty, and Horatio ten years older. It seems strange, therefore, that the latter should have a truant disposition and be reluctant to return to Wittenberg; but then, perhaps, he was a professor in the university. The Gertrude of Miss Pauncefort retains all its previous merits; Mr. Chippendale is again an excellent Polonius; Mr. Johnson plays with much unctuous humour as the First Gravedigger; the Ghost is as impressive as ever in the hands of Mr.

Mead; Mr. Kyrle Bellew developes a happy idea of the "water-fly" Osric; Mr. Elwood and Mr. Pinero are well placed as Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern, and all the minor parts are in competent hands. Indeed, what is known as all-round excellence—the chief feature in the performances at the subsidized theatres of the Continent—is conspicuous enough in this revival, and the smoothness of the whole representation shows that the rehearsals have been neither few nor far between.

Nor is the revival without literary interest. The Lyceum version differs in many respects from any previously arranged. Mr. Irving appears to have gone carefully through the text, expunging what is not absolutely necessary to a comprehension of the author's intention, restoring several striking passages which have hitherto been neglected, and introducing many innovations in matters of detail. This "arrangement" has been published, with a preface by Mr. Marshall, but in a letter to a contemporary he explicitly states that he has had no share whatever in the revision of the text or any other part of the work. Fortinbras, who has been described by a German critic as one of the most important personages in the play, inasmuch as his decision of character serves as a foil to Hamlet's irresolution, does not, as usual, appear. The time may not be far distant when the dramatic value of the contrast will be practically recognised by representatives of the Dane, more especially as by bringing Fortinbras on the stage they will have the chance of delivering another fine soliloquy. Apart from this point, Mr. Irving has accomplished his task with good judgment. In the first scene, as in Mr. Taylor's "arrangement" of the play, brought out at the Crystal Palace in 1873, the ghost makes its appearance, not in a "front" scene, but on the battlements of the castle. The old stage direction that the perturbed spirit should make the revelation on "another part of the platform" is probably due to the absence of scenery from Elizabethan theatres; and the revelation is now made in a lonely spot at some distance from the castle. This change is in strict accordance with the text; Hamlet follows the ghost from midnight until the approach of dawn, and his words, "I'll go no further," joined to the difficulty Horatio and Marcellus evidently have in finding him, suggest—unless, indeed, the scene occurs at a season of the year when the interval between midnight and day-break is very short—that a considerable distance must have been traversed. That the revelation is made with greater effect in a deserted spot than within earshot of the revelry going on in the castle will at once be apparent. The quaint apostrophes to the ghost, "Art thou there, old truepenny?" and "Well said, old mole," are wisely restored, as they go to show both the unhinged state of Hamlet's mind and his anxiety to mislead his friends as to the true meaning of the supernatural visitation. The closet scene is enacted in a room adjoining the queen's bedchamber, and the ghost passes through the door of the latter as if to enforce the behest—

"Let not the royal bed of Denmark," &c.

Here the ghost appears in a sort of robe instead of the usual armour, an alteration justified by a direction in the first quarto edition,

"Enter the ghost in his night gowne," and by Hamlet's exclamation—

"My father in his habit as he lived!"

In the first act Ophelia is buried at nightfall, first because that used to be the custom in the case of suicide, and secondly because of Hamlet's allusion to the "wandering stars." From two lines in the quarto of 1603 it is clear that Shakspeare intended the events of the fifth act to take place on one day; these lines, however, are omitted from all the subsequent editions, and Mr. Irving is probably in agreement with the after-intention of the author in causing a night to elapse between the burial and the fencing match. Is it likely, as Mr. Marshall in effect asks, that such a match would have been proceeded with on the day of the interment? The scene between Hamlet and Osric has hitherto been played in "a hall;" now they are "outside the castle," and the line—

"Put your bonnet to its right use; 'tis for the head."

is no longer felt as out of place. In saying, "I will walk here in the hall," Hamlet may have indicated the castle by a gesture. The last scene is laid in a hall, and through some arches at the back may be seen a lawn, and the orchard in which the late king met his death. This change is open to the objection that it renders Hamlet's exclamation, "Let the door be locked," almost unintelligible; yet it may be supposed that the "door" was the only available means of exit, and the idea of having the murderer's punishment meted out to him within sight of the scene of his crime is peculiarly happy.

The manner in which the tragedy is put upon the stage calls for very high praise. In regard to costume Mr. Irving must have found his task attended with considerable difficulty. Hamlet, if not an entire myth, lived in the fifth or sixth century. The dramatist treats the story as one of the Elizabethan age, and with no regard for local colouring or historical accuracy. The personages in the play talk and think in an Elizabethan style; Hamlet himself is an incarnation of the intellectual agitation to which the Reformation gave rise, and cannon and other modern instruments of warfare are alluded to. The Danish costume of the dark ages, so far as we are able to ascertain, was far from picturesque, and Mr. Irving adopted the wiser of the two courses before him in deciding to give a sixteenth century character to the dresses employed in this revival. That those dresses are in good taste and agreeable contrast need hardly be said. The scenery, or to speak more correctly, the decoration, marks a distinct advance in this branch of art, and shows that as far as at least one theatre is concerned the charges recently brought against scene-painters by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald in these pages have little or no weight. In two scenes the Lyceum artist may be said to have surpassed himself. The first is that in which the supernatural revelation is made. The ghost has taken Hamlet to

"The dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base into the sea."

and, standing among a number of massive rocks, proceeds to speak.

The soft light of the moon falls upon the spectral figure; not a sound from below can be heard, and the first faint flushes of the dawn are stealing over the immense expanse of water before us. The weird grandeur of the scene can hardly be appreciated from description. Equally striking in its way is that of the burial of Ophelia. The churchyard is on a hill near the palace, and as night comes on the funeral procession winds slowly up the ascent. Never before have the "maimed rites" been so exactly and impressively performed. The scene of the battlements at Elsinore, with the illuminated windows of the palace in the background, and the star alluded to by Bernardo glistening in the northern sky, is also very effective. The interior scenes, albeit well painted, are not so satisfactory, for the reason that the architecture is not all of the same style and period. Mr. Marshall says that Mr. Irving, "without attempting to overburden the play with spectacular effect, and to smother the poet under a mass of decoration, has endeavoured to obtain as much assistance from the scene-painter's art as the poet's own description may seem to justify." This object has been completely attained; the scenery, like every other accessory, aids the imagination of the spectator instead of disturbing it.

The first night of the revival can never be forgotten by those who were present. Such an audience as that which assembled is hardly to be seen except at the Français or the Vaudeville in Paris on a première. Literature, art, the learned professions, and rank and fashion were well represented in the stalls and boxes. The pit and the gallery were filled to repletion; indeed, the approaches to those parts of the house were occupied long before the opening of the doors. For such a spectacle as this we have no precedent in England: the great players of the part could rely for ardent support upon only one section of their audience; Mr. Irving seems to be popular with all classes. In the West-end it has become the fashion to see him in every character he undertakes; the enthusiasm he excites among the great mass of playgoers is indisputable. This popularity will, if anything, be increased by the alterations he has made in the theatre during the recess. In addition to having *Hamlet* played as it never has been played before, he has had the house decorated, more comfortable stalls provided, had backs and rails put to the seats in the pit and gallery, fees abolished throughout the house, and other improvements effected. Formerly of a dingy aspect, the interior of the Lyceum, with its new and graceful act drop, is exceedingly pleasing to the eye. That Mr. Irving met with a most cordial reception goes without saying, and the enthusiasm displayed at the end of each act must have quickened the pulse of the oldest and most experienced playgoer. Characteristically terse was the speech which the new manager delivered at the close. "The performance you have seen to-night," he said, "has been the dream of my life. Rest assured that I shall do everything in my power to elevate my art and promote your comfort."

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that two of our chief comedy theatres have during the past month reopened their doors, it cannot be said that there is much, apart from the Shakspearean presentation at

the Lyceum, in the dramatic doings of the month to call for comment. If a revival was demanded by the circumstances of the case at the Prince of Wales's, no better choice than that of *Caste* could possibly have been made. *Caste* was the most dramatic, and in every respect the best, of Robertson's plays; and in it Mrs. Bancroft, who is undeniably the first of our actresses in her own line, is fitted to the utmost perfection with a part. She has never done anything quite so good as Polly Eccles, and probably it is not going too far to say that nothing of the nature of Polly Eccles has in our time been performed by any other artist with this high degree of art. To say that *Caste* could not exist or could not satisfy without the interpretation of Mrs. Bancroft is surely to pay the comedy a very poor compliment; but it is allowable to doubt whether by her absence the representation of the piece to which we have been accustomed would not lose one of its most characteristic features. Like the actress's Polly, the Hawtree of Mr. Bancroft and the Eccles of Mr. George Honey are too well known to demand description or discussion, and it will be sufficient to note that while Mr. Bancroft gains as much as ever by that ever-present moderation of tone which his many imitators so invariably forget, Mr. Honey seems in danger of widening his broad humour into something very like caricature. His Eccles is a wonderful study, and it needs no deepening of colour nor accentuation of outline. Of the newcomers Mr. Arthur Cecil makes, as Sam Gerridge, the success which had fairly been anticipated for him; whilst Mr. John Clayton fails as George D'Alroy, because he is manifestly out of his element in such a rôle. Of course he makes D'Alroy a gentleman, but he has not the trick of making a gentleman of his order interesting. Miss Roselle, on the other hand, gets all the interest possible out of Esther, and raises her position as an actress by her treatment of one or two passages, the exact tone of which is by no means easy to catch; and the same may be said of the Marquise of Miss Le Thiere. Thus, on the whole, the representation is adequate, and worthy of the reputation both of the theatre and of the piece. It has, moreover, the appearance of being thoroughly welcome.

MR. HARE, like Mrs. Bancroft, has decided to depend for his new season, or at any rate for the opening of it, upon the renewal of an effort which has served him well in days gone by. These days, however, have gone by so recently, and both *A Scrap of Paper* and *A Quiet Rubber* have been so recently seen at the Court, that a mere chronicle of the event is enough. It seems probable that the revivals are only intended to be temporary; but in the meantime they suffice to show that in *A Scrap of Paper* Mr. and Mrs. Kendal have both gained greatly by long practice, and that Mr. Hare's sketch of the imbecile old whist-player is as diverting as ever. Additions to the company, which bid fair to prove valuable, are those of Mr. Wenman and Mr. Macintosh, the former especially showing himself as Mr. Sullivan to be a finished comedian.

At the Royalty Theatre under Miss Kate Santley a feeble little comedy by Mr. Palgrave Simpson, entitled *Little Cinderella*, could not manage to stave off misfortune. There is an exercise in com-

position which consists of turning poetry into prose; and though the labour may be useful, the result is by no means intrinsically pleasing. It is a *tour de force* of this nature which Mr. Simpson attempted with that familiar nursery-poem *Cinderella*. He translated its motives and its characters, making the time of the action the present day, fitting the hero with a frock-coat, and parodying the fairy god-mother as a kind-hearted out-door servant of the family. The general effect was puzzling and incongruous; it was rarely possible to know whether one was intended to laugh or to be seriously interested, and even if one discovered how one ought to be affected, the difficulty of carrying out the intention remained. *Little Cinderella* was in fact neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring—neither comedy, fairy-play, nor good burlesque; and it failed accordingly to meet with any definite appreciation. For the most part it was poorly played, and Miss Santley as the heroine could not give any appearance of sincerity to her portrayal of ingenuous innocence. In *Tita in Thibet*, an amusing musical trifle which followed, both she and Mr. W. H. Fisher were seen to much greater advantage.

THE three chief pieces produced at the West-end for Christmas were the pantomimes at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and *Never too Late to Mend* at the Princess's. Of the pantomimes the leading characteristics may be very shortly summed up. At Drury Lane the whole attraction lies in the Vokeses, who are much the same as ever—in popularity as in business. Covent Garden makes the hit of the year by its scenery, its "procession," and its giant, all of which are well worthy to be wondered at and admired. A word, too, must be said for the old-fashioned fun of Mr. Byron's Gaiety pantomime, with Mdlle. *Ænea's* equally beautiful and mysterious "flying dance." At the Princess's Mr. Gooch has mounted Mr. Charles Reade's somewhat gloomy drama, *It is Never too Late to Mend*, so excellently, and the piece is played with such spirit, that the revival has had abundant vitality. Perhaps the best thing in the performance is Mr. Charles Warner's capital Tom Robinson—full of life and variety. Mr. Sinclair as Fielding, and Miss Rose Leclercq as Susan Calhaem are both well-placed; Miss Maud Milton, Mr. Redmund, and Mr. de Belleville help to complete a very competent cast. Though the play cannot be pronounced so pleasing as the novel, and though the ridiculous bombast with which it is announced must be greatly against it, it has sufficient intrinsic strength to hold its own when it is placed on the stage so effectively as it is at the Princess's.

IN THE PROVINCES.

THE vitality of pantomime as a form of entertainment in England can hardly be appreciated unless we turn over the programmes of the provincial theatres at this time of the year. Not long ago it was confidently asserted that burlesque and *opéra-bouffe* would sponge poor harlequin out of existence, at any rate as far as our principal theatres were concerned. This cheerful prediction has not been verified; *opéra-bouffe* and burlesque are practically things of

the past, but the spangled hero and his companions are still accepted as objects proper to be looked upon at Yuletide. Pantomime, though an exotic, has evidently taken deep root in the United Kingdom; and the peculiar humours of the clown—a figure of essentially British origin—will probably serve to extend its lease of life for an indefinite period. During the time it has flourished in this country, but more especially in the present century, it has undergone many changes for the worse, but has gained rather than lost in popularity. This statement is abundantly confirmed by the fact that at the time we write pantomime forms the staple entertainment in forty-nine out of every fifty theatres in the country. The groundwork of the pieces is in the majority of cases supplied by the old familiar nursery tales, and if it should be suggested, as it doubtless will, that in future this custom would be more honoured in the breach than the observance, we might reply that the story of a pantomime is a matter of but minor importance provided the author is clever at making pegs on which pretty music and singing and decorations can be hung. In all directions this condition is fairly complied with. The leading theatres of the cities and chief towns, Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, Glasgow, produce pantomimes which for *verve* and spectacular effect are hardly inferior to those of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Standard, and the lessees in smaller towns do not fail to seize their opportunity in a liberal and enterprising spirit. It would be invidious to select any for particular reference; enough to say that from the reports which reach our hands it appears that as much has been done in 1878-9 as in any previous season. In some places, it must be pointed out, pantomime is conspicuous only by its absence. Thus the indefatigable Mr. Toole has been flying from town to town about Liverpool; Miss Kate Bateman has had the courage to continue her provincial tour with such plays as *Queen Elizabeth* and *Mary Warner*; and Mr. Barry Sullivan, after a short rest, started again in the middle of the month.

IN PARIS.

PERHAPS the most important theatrical event in Paris during the past month was the production at the Ambigu of an adaptation of M. Zola's *Assommoir*, in which the cause of ultra-realism as against the conventional in literature is practically upheld. It would not be easy to convey an adequate idea of the interest excited by the announcement; every available seat was eagerly purchased, and the house was densely crowded. Some came with a predetermination to laugh or even hiss, others to applaud. M. Zola too frequently assails contemporary novel-writers not to make many enemies; the converts to his doctrine, however, are not less numerous, and it has been said that the first production of *L'Assommoir* would prove as important an event in French theatrical history as that of *Marion Delorme*. This view has not been borne out by the event. The novel, as most of our readers may be aware, is a graphic picture of the lower classes of Paris, exhibiting them

in no very favourable light. It is played and mounted with great care; but although the audience viewed with mingled pleasure and surprise some of the scenes in which it abounds, notably those of the lavoir and the fight between the two men, we doubt whether a play dealing with so repulsive a story will have more than a temporary success. The fidelity with which M. Gil Naza portrayed the death of an inveterate drunkard was almost horrible. Indeed, it is with a feeling of relief that we turn to the latest novelty at the Variétés,—*Le Grand Casimir*, a three-act vaudeville by MM. Prével and St. Albin, with music by M. Lecocq. The story is very complicated, but its outline may be briefly indicated. Casimir, the manager of a circus, gets dreadfully into debt, and for the sake of his wife, a charming rider, has it given out that he is dead. Being unable to disprove the story, his creditors find themselves without a remedy. Two years afterwards we find him in Corsica. Having inadvertently drunk at a café from the glass of the host's daughter, Ninetta, and so compromised her reputation, he is required to marry her, and is accepting his destiny with a good grace when his wife, who has been with the circus in America, reappears on the scene. The lady is led to believe that he is only a best man, and an affectionate letter which she writes to him in that belief falls into the hands of the real best man and subjects her to a good deal of annoyance at his hands. In the end, of course, the husband and the wife are happily re-united. The music is extremely pleasing, particularly in a buffo trio in the third act, and a duet in which the wife learns how to weep for her husband when he is supposed to be dead. M. Dupuis is well fitted as Casimir, and nothing in its way could be better than Madame Chaumont's acting and singing as the wife. The success of *Le Grand Casimir* is beyond doubt. As much can hardly be said for the new comedy at the Gymnase, *L'Age Ingrat*, by M. Edouard Pailleron. The central figure in the plot is a man who, despite the machinations of the match-making mammas of Paris, resolutely holds aloof from matrimony, but is eventually drawn into it. Not the least interesting of the characters appears to be taken from life,—a Countess Julia Walker, an American by birth, whose husband (as we are informed) is travelling for his pleasure. Mdle. Regnault, in St. Germain, Mdle. Legault, and Mdle. Tessandier are in the cast. M. Offenbach's *Brigands* has been revived at the Gaité with great splendour, Madame Peschard and M. Christian heading the cast. The reputation which M. Georges de Porte Riche acquired by his *Drame sous Philippe II.* will scarcely be maintained by his one-act comedy *Les Deux Fautes*, brought out at the Odéon. Here a mother objects to her son marrying an irreproachable girl because a brother of the latter had seduced a woman before he made her his wife, but the sequel shows that this over-nice old lady had herself been in a doubtful position on one occasion in her early life. The same theatre has also revived Marivaux's *Ecole des Mères*, written for the Comédie Italienne in, we think, 1732. The less said of another novelty, *Le Grand Père*, by M. Georges Petit, the better. The two hundred and thirty-ninth anniversary of the birth of Racine was duly celebrated at the Comédie Française. The play that evening

was *Andromaque*, with Mdlle. Bernhardt in the chief character. The *apropos* was from the pen of M. Truffier, a member of the company. In *Les Plaideurs*, which came afterwards, M. Coquelin aîné played Petit Jean.

IN BERLIN.

THE Royal Playhouse marked the last day of the old year by the production of a classical programme consisting of a short piece written by Goethe for a festal occasion, and which has not before found its way into the regular repertory of any theatre, and of *The Comedy of Errors*. Goethe's *Paläophron und Neoterpe* was written in 1800 for the birthday of the Duchess Amalie of Saxe-Weimar, on which occasion it was acted before a select circle by a party of amateurs, all of whom wore masks, except the fair representative of Neoterpe. The piece, which is written in verse of various metres, is mainly a dialogue between Paläophron (antiquity) and Neoterpe (modern times), who quarrel with one another while their respective attendants, the aged Griesgram and Haberecht, representatives of grumbling and wrangling, as their names indicate, and the youthful Gelbschnabel and Naseweis, who represent pertness and inquisitiveness, are present to take part in the dispute; but when they have sent away those troublesome attendants Paläophron and Neoterpe make up their differences, and join hands. Masks were not worn on the present occasion. Herr Berndal and Fräulein Meyer played the title parts, and they and the representatives of the minor characters delivered Goethe's verses in excellent style, gaining for the *quasi* novelty a very favourable reception. The *Comedy of Errors* was played, in a German version compressed into three acts by Herr C. von Holtei, and brought the evening and the year to a merry conclusion, being acted with much spirit and vivacity. Herr Vollmer and Herr Klein were the two Dromios, and the former deserves special mention for the comic power which he displayed. The closing days of the old year were also marked by the revival of Grillparzer's *Der Traum ein Leben*, which must not be confounded with *Das Leben ein Traum*, a well-known German version of Calderon's *La Vida es Sueño*. Originally produced at the Vienna Burgtheater in October, 1834, this play of Grillparzer's has steadily maintained its place in the German repertory, and cannot be regarded as undeserving of the favour it has enjoyed. The hero, Rustan, is a bold, restless youth, who grows discontented with the quiet life he leads at his uncle Massud's rural home, and after having won the affections of the fair Mirza comes to look upon her love as a chain. After a day's hunting in the woods in company with his negro slave, Zanga, he comes home in a state of fierce agitation, owing to a dispute he has had, and declares his intention to set out the next morning, and join the army of the King of Samarkand, who is at war with the Khan of Tiflis. At the close of the first act Rustan falls off to sleep, while the voice of a pious Dervish is heard in a neighbouring hut, singing a chant which proclaims the vanity of earthly ambition. The remaining acts represent a dream in which Rustan joins the army, kills the

king, and marries the king's daughter, by whom he is soon denounced as her father's murderer. Hunted like a wild beast, he falls into a river, and thereupon awakens and finds that it is all a dream, and that he is in his uncle's hut, with Mirza and the old man watching by his side. The performance was on the whole good, though the actors do not quite succeed in the difficult task of distinguishing between the real action of the first act and that which takes place in the dream. Herr Ludwig threw much fire and passion into his representation of Rustan, and Herr Kahle's Zanga was marked by much originality, though marred by indistinctness of utterance. The Mirza of Fräulein Frauenthal unfortunately left much to be desired.

At the Residenz Theatre, the *Fourchambault* has at length been withdrawn, after seventy-four consecutive performances, an unusually long run for Berlin, and has been succeeded by a new version, by Herr Paul Lindau, of the *Mademoiselle de Belleisle* of the elder Dumas, which attracted a large and fashionable audience on the 14th January, two of the most distinguished artists on the German stage having been engaged to play the leading parts. This highly-effective play has been a favourite with French actresses ever since its first production at the Français, in April 1839, when Mars made a striking success in the title-rôle. A few years ago the part was essayed by Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt with ill-success, and it now belongs to Mdlle. Broisat, whose performance Londoners will soon have an opportunity of judging. The character does not show Frau Niemann-Raabe at her best, and she hardly rises to the level of the great situation in which the injured lady gives the lie to the Duke, but she plays other scenes with great effect, and in a rarely natural manner. Herr Friedrich Haase gave a masterly portrait of the Duc de Richelieu, though he perhaps represents him as rather too *blasé*, and thus renders improbable the eagerness which the Duke at last shows to repair the mischief he has done. At the Wallner Theatre, *Doctor Klaus* still continues its prosperous career. The National Theater has given, with little success, *Die Herrin von Oestrot*, one of the earlier works of the Norwegian dramatist Ibsen, and, with better success, a piece called *Leid und Freud*, from the pen of Herr A. Slottko, a writer of promise. The annual season of French plays began at the Saal Theater on New-Year's Day with M. Sardou's *Vieux Garçons*, interpreted by a fair company, which, however, brings with it no novelties.

IN VIENNA.

OF the novelties produced at the Burgtheater during the past month we may give priority to *Das Haus Darnley*, a translation of Lord Lytton's posthumous work, *The House of Darnley*, which was performed for the first time on the 15th January, with a very strong cast, Herr Sonnenthal being the Mr. Darnley, and Herr Baumeister the Mr. Mainwaring, while Frau Janisch played Lady Juliet, and Frau Hartmann Miss Placid. The first three acts were well received, but a change came over the spirit of the audience during the fourth

act, and they freely expressed their disapproval of the last act. The acting was throughout excellent, and the critics express regret that it should be thrown away upon a play which no acting could save. Our readers will remember the ill-success of the original on its production at the London Court Theatre, and the efforts which were nevertheless made to keep it on the bills. In Vienna no similar attempt will be made to protract its existence, and we may safely predict that its second performance, which took place on the 16th January, will be its last. A five-act tragedy by Herr Ferdinand von Saar, entitled *Die Beiden de Witt* was not much more fortunate. The scene of the tragedy is laid in Holland in 1672, and its subject is the sad fate of the brothers John and Cornelius de Witt, whom the historian Ranke has described as being amongst the greatest men of their time and the greatest aristocratic republicans of all times. Their story, though impressive, is not dramatic, nor has the writer made the most of it, such as it is. The piece is written in verse which occasionally sinks below the level of prose.

At the Stadt-theater the most important event of the past month was the first production in Vienna of Herr Heinrich Laube's *Prinz Friedrich*, an historical play in five acts, written several years ago and performed with success at most of the principal German theatres. It is a work of such merit that we cannot understand the long delay in its production at the theatre managed by Herr Laube. The subject of the piece is the long conflict between Frederick William I. of Prussia and his son, Prince Frederick, afterwards known as Frederick the Great. The first act is not a very clear exposition of the subject, and is overloaded with political details. The second act, on the other hand, is full of human interest, its only fault being that it is so brilliant as to throw the remaining acts into the shade. The rebellion of the spirited young prince against his austere father's commands to attend the formal family devotions opens the conflict, and the scene in which, the prince having disobeyed his father's summons to prayers, the king enters the prince's rooms and finds him and his merry companions engaged in a French theatrical performance, hateful to the pious court, is highly effective. The third act is also full of animation, its leading incidents being the flight of Prince Frederick and his friend, Lieutenant von Katte, and their capture and condemnation by court-martial. The cruel execution of Katte is represented by the dramatist as not having been ordered by the king, and the reconciliation between father and son, which takes place in the last act, is thus rendered less improbable. The play was very well acted in most parts. Herr Lobe gave a striking portrait of the despotic king, and Mesdames Frank (Dorothea Ritter), Weisse (the Queen), and Schratt (the Princess), were highly satisfactory. On the other hand, Herr Mylius was only a tolerable Prince Frederick. A new comedy, by Herr Julius Rosen, entitled *Nervus Rerum*, calls for little notice; it resembles most of its author's productions in its lack of any plot properly so-called, but is written in a lively, if occasionally coarse, style, and contains many amusing incidents. A German version of the *Mari d'Ida* of Messrs. Delacour and Mancel, entitled *Der Seifensieder*, excited much laughter, but was condemned by the critics as the

most audacious piece of immorality recently imported from France. *Apropos* of French importations, we may here record the significant fact that Baron Dingelstedt, the director of the Burgtheater, has invited the managers of the other theatres to a conference, the principal object of which is to devise some means of putting a stop to the reckless competition for French novelties, which has driven prices up to fabulous figures.

THE Carl Theater produced during the past month a translation of Messrs. Dennergy and Cormon's *Cause Célèbre*, under the title *Schuldlos Verurtheilt*, with good success; and with still greater success Herr L'Arronge's *Doctor Klaus*, which was described in our pages on the occasion of its first production at the Berlin Wallner Theater, where it has not yet come to the end of its unusually long run. One of the minor theatres—that in the Josephstadt—has produced successfully a new piece by Herr Anzengruber, entitled *Ein Faustschlag*, the plot of which turns upon the relations between capital and labour.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IN Rome, the dramatic season at the Valle Theatre closed before the end of December, and playgoers have heard with sorrow that Virginia Marini will not revisit Rome for two years. The favourite actress chose for her farewell performance the title-part in M. Dumas' *Dame aux Camélias*, in which she has no rival on the Italian stage; indeed, there are few French actresses with whom she need fear comparison in that fascinating rôle. A few words about the concluding performances of the dramatic season. The fame of the *Fourchambault* led to the production of some of its author's earlier works, his *Lions et Renards*, under the Italian title of *Leoni e Volpi*, giving good scope for the display of the powers of the Bellotti-Bon company in general, and of Signora Marini and Signor Novelli in particular. New productions by native playwrights were less successful, though a new comedy, entitled *Silvana*, from the prolific pen of Signor Marengo, met with some favour; but a drama by Signor Saraceni, entitled *Amore e Patria*, proved an utter failure. Signor Rossi attracted good audiences at the Apollo Theatre by producing, in addition to other plays well known in Italy, Shakspeare's *Coriolanus* and *Macbeth*, which do not form part of the repertory of any other Italian actor. At Christmas, the opera season at the Apollo Theatre opened with a moderately good performance of Meyerbeer's *Africaine*, by Signori Stagno and Caldani-Athos and Mesdames Bernau and de Vere. After several performances of that opera, *Norma* was produced, but in such a wretched manner that the municipal authorities prohibited any further representations of it. A *ballet d'action* entitled *Il vello d'Ora* (The Golden Fleece) has since been produced with some success, owing more to the pantomimic capacity of Signora Boschetti than to any splendour of *mise en scène*. The Argentina Theatre has produced with success a comic opera, entitled *La Marsigliese*, by the Spanish composer Caballero, and the Valle

Theatre is now occupied by the Bergonzoni Company, which devotes itself to the works of Messrs. Lecocq and Offenbach.

IN Milan, the winter season commenced with considerable brilliancy on the Santo Stefano, which corresponds to our Boxing-day. La Scala opened with a remarkably fine performance of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, the leading parts being filled by Mesdames D'Angeri and Turolla, and Signori Tamagno and Kaschmann. This opera was repeated several times to good houses, and then gave place to the *Dolores* of Signor Anteri, which failed to please, owing to the inferiority of the singers entrusted with the leading parts. The opera was followed by a new ballet, by Signor Manzotti, entitled *Sieba*, which attained an extraordinary success. The new season at the Manzoni Theatre opened with a fine performance of *Dora*, by the Bellotti-Bon Company, No. 1, Signori Virginia Marini playing the title-part, with her accustomed power. Signor Paolo Ferrari's *Due Dame* was given on the following evening, and seemed to have lost none of its attractiveness by frequent repetition. Of novelties since produced, M. Legouvé's *A Deux de Jeu*, translated, under the name of *Da Galeotto a Marinaro*, by a gentleman who writes under the pseudonym of Yorick, was highly successful; while an adultery drama, by Signor Castelnovo, was such a fiasco as we trust will induce its author to leave that theme to French dramatists, and return to purer motives, on which he has constructed many a pleasing and successful work. The brothers Ricci provided the Santo Stefano entertainment at two houses, their *Chi dura vince* being given at the Dal Verme, and their well-known *Crispino e la Comare* at the Carcano, in both cases with success.

IN MADRID.

THE success of the *Nudo Gordiano* of Señor Sellés proved as lasting as was expected, and that drama has, since we noticed it, been transferred to several provincial stages, and has undergone the questionable honour of being parodied, a fate rarely escaped by any Spanish drama that attracts much public attention. Another work, based upon the same all-absorbing theme of adultery, has since been produced at the Teatro Español, and received with considerable favour. *El Paraíso de Milton* (Milton's Paradise), as the piece is called, is a drama in three acts and in verse, by Señores Echevarria and Santibañes, and has for its subject the unhappy conjugal relations of our great epic poet, which the Spanish dramatists treat with a total disregard of historical accuracy. The first act introduces us to a happy family circle, in which Milton spends the evening in reading his "Paradise Lost" to his daughter Deborah and his second wife, whom he is represented as having saved from certain death. This happiness is soon turned into sorrow. Deborah is about to be married to a young officer named Richard Overton, when the intended husband's father discovers that the poet's wife has been unfaithful to him, and refuses to allow his son to marry into a family so stained. Milton, convinced of the truth of the charge, turns his wife out of doors, and sends a

challenge to her lover, but just as the combatants are about to cross swords, a cloud comes over the poet's eyes, and he falls to the ground completely blind. This is the best scene in the drama, and produced a strong effect. The guilty couple fly the country, and go to Turkey, where they become Mahomedans. The lover dies, and after two years of suffering the offcast wife comes back a broken-down woman, and begs bread at her wronged husband's door. Deborah compassionately takes her in and seats her at the table, and in a very touching scene the poet recognises the woman by the sound of her voice, and at length forgives her; whereupon old Overton relents, and gives his consent to his son's marriage with Deborah, the unhappy wife departing to hide her shame in a convent. But for the fact that this piece appeared almost simultaneously with the *Nudo Gordiano* we should be disposed to regard it as a reply to that drama. Both pieces deal with the problem what to do with an adulterous wife. Señor Sellés adopts the solution of M. Dumas and plainly says, "Kill her;" but the authors of *El Paraíso de Milton* say, "Forgive her," and represent the wronged husband as struck down with blindness when he attempts to take vengeance into his own hands. Both pieces have considerable literary merit, but the former is vastly superior from the standpoint of dramatic effect. Don Rafael Calvo represented with much force and dignity the character of Milton, which is but faintly sketched by the authors. The rest of the cast, except the Deborah of Señora Mendoza Tenorio, left much to be desired.

THE other theatres have done little that deserves notice. The Teatro de la Comedia has produced an unceasing stream of ephemeral pieces, few of which attained or deserved success. Perhaps the most successful of them is a two-act comedy by Don Ricardo Vega, entitled *Acompaño á usted en el Sentimiento* (I am with you in spirit) which deals with the time-worn subject of the return of a person supposed to be dead. This time it is a husband who finds that the only person who mourns his loss is his wife. The piece is not written in the best taste, but contains marks of keen observation. In a piece in three acts and in verse, entitled *Soledad*, and produced at the same house, the prolific Don Eusebio Blasco has tried to produce stronger dramatic effects than he generally aims at, but the result is not satisfactory, and such success as the piece achieved was due to its comic scenes and to the acting of Señoras Tubau, Valverde, and Fernandez, and of the manager, Señor Mario. The parody of Señor Sellés' drama above referred to bears the title of *El Nudo Corredizo* (The Running Knot), and was well received at the Teatro Eslava. Its author is Don Erique Bedma, who has been happy in his treatment of the most striking situations of the original.

IN NEW YORK.

THE Union Square Theatre, from the management of which, by the way, Mr. Shook has seceded, is again basking in the smiles of fortune. It lately produced a three-act comedy by Mr. Brouson

Howard, entitled *The Banker's Daughter*. The plot, it is true, is somewhat conventional, but is treated with so much spirit that the piece seems likely to remain on the bills for some time. The heroine marries a wealthy man in order to save her father from ruin, although her affections are bestowed in another direction. The husband discovers her secret, goes away from her, but eventually has a convincing proof that after the separation he had unconsciously won something more than her respect. Mr. Charles Thorne is the husband, and Miss Sara Jewett the wife. By the way the author of a piece called *The Golden Calf* alleges that the plot of *The Banker's Daughter* has been stolen from a piece which he sent to the theatre some time ago, but it is extremely improbable that an author of the creative power of Mr. Howard—to put the matter on no higher ground—would be guilty of such a theft. Mr. Mapleson's tenure of the Academy of Music has come to an end. That speculation proved most remunerative, and it is much to be regretted that such an incident as we are about to relate should have occurred. Miss Minnie Hauk was announced to sing at a concert at Booth's Theatre one Sunday evening, but at the time when the performance was to have commenced somebody came forward and announced that she refused to come. Mr. Mapleson lost his temper; he bitterly upbraided the lady, fined her a week's salary, and threatened to have her imprisoned. Miss Hauk says that she objects to sing on Sundays, and that the announcement that she would appear on this occasion was wholly unauthorized. The success of Madame Gerster continues without abatement. Mr. Jefferson and Mr. M'Cullough appeared shortly before Christmas, the former at the Fifth Avenue Theatre as Rip van Winkle, and the other at the Opera House as Coriolanus. In the Roman tragedy the red caps affected by the French revolutionary *not* in '93 were worn by the representatives of the citizens! Miss Kate Claxton has opened the Lyceum; a version of *That Lass o' Lowrie's* is being played at Booth's; and, pending the reappearance of Mr. Lister Wallack at his theatre, an adaptation of *Mein Leopold*, in which Mr. John Gilbert represents the old shoemaker with rare force, has been produced. Mr. Boucicault is playing at the Grand Opera House in the *Shaughraun*.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

IN consequence of the death of an old and valued friend, Mrs. Brown, Lady Burdett Coutts was not present at the Lyceum Theatre on the 30th December.

"Do *Richard II.*," shouted some one in the pit at the Lyceum, as Mr. Irving was making his brief speech on the night of the 30th December. The suggestion is worth consideration, but let us hope that we shall see *King Lear* or the *Merchant of Venice* first.

MR. CHIPPENDALE's benefit is fixed for February 24.

MRS. THEODORE MARTIN is about to give a reading on behalf of the sufferers by the Glasgow Bank disaster. *Exemplo monstrante viam.*

MADAME RISTORI has been playing in Genoa.

SIGNOR VERDI, recently being asked whom he considered the first singer in the world, replied:—"Ma première—c'est Patti! Ma seconde—c'est Patti! Ma troisième—c'est Patti! Mon tout—c'est Patti!"—which was very good for Verdi, and better for Patti.

MADAME PATTI was lately at Hamburg. A correspondent of the Paris *Figaro* remarks on her activity in the part of Rosina, in the *Barbère*, as disproving the alarming rumour of the affection she was said to be suffering from in her knee. This rumour, says the *Figaro*, only served to show how many admirers the prima donna still has, for since the false report went forth she is said to have received no fewer than 10,000 letters or telegrams offering remedies or expressing sympathy.

MRS. BANCROFT intends to retire from the stage, but before doing so will go through a round of characters in Mr. Robertson's comedies. Two or three years, therefore, may elapse before she utters the—from her—unwelcome word, "Farewell."

SIGNOR SALVINI has had a sad bereavement. His wife, an English lady, whose maiden name was Lotty Sharpe, expired at Firenze, near Florence, on the 27th of last December. Madame Salvini was scarcely twenty-four at the time of her decease.

THE King of Portugal has finished his version of the *Merchant of Venice*. His translation of *Othello* is far advanced.

THE wills of Mr. Phelps and Mr. Lewes have just been proved. The personal estate of the former was sworn under £9,000, and that of the latter under £2,000. Mr. Lewes gives his interest in his writings to his three sons, and the residue of his estate to George Eliot. Mr. Phelps's property goes to his two daughters.

RACINE's *Mithridate* is to be revived at the Théâtre Français, with Mdle. Bernhardt as Monime.

EVERY Wednesday evening there is a musical reunion, after supper,

at the Green-Room Club, and on the 15th January, when Mr. Irving took the chair, the attendance was unusually large. Among those present were Captain Burton, Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. Frank Marshall, Mr. Andel, Mr. Walter Pollock, Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. E. L. Blanchard, Mr. Arthur Cecil, and Mr. Edward Terry.

M. SARDOU has purchased a small estate at Nice, intending to erect upon it a Villa Dora. Before long he will have M. Jules Clarétie for a neighbour.

MDLLE. JEANNE SAMARY and M. Coquelin cadet have been made sociétaires of the Comédie Française.

M. LECOCQ has dedicated the music of *La Camargo* to Mdle. Zulma-Bouffar, with these lines:—

“Tu fais revivre, en copiste fidèle,
De Camargo le type gracieux !
Mais tu surpasses ton modèle,
Car, si tu sais danser comme elle,
Tu chantes beaucoup mieux !”

The librettists, on the other hand, have offered their congratulations to the actress in the form of a line of music.

MR. E. S. DALLAS, formerly the husband of Miss Glyn, died last month. The promise held forth by his earlier writings has not been realized, although his *Gay Science* was a work of high merit.

THE *Academy* says there is hope that Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps will shortly resume his Shakspearean labours, and at intervals himself publish the large collections that he has been making for many years in illustration of Shakspeare's works, life, and town.

THE Marquis de Dos Hermanas, Don Mathias de Velasco y Rogas, has undertaken to translate Shakspeare into Spanish. The *Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and the *Sonnets*, have already appeared; *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are in the press. The Marquis translates freely; *Romeo and Juliet* is called *Julieta y Romeo*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *El Sueno de una Noche de Verano*.

THE *Athenæum* states that an important scheme for a new Dictionary of English Dramatic Literature, as exhaustive as Mr. Collier's, but more critical, seems to be coming to maturity. It is to be edited by Mr. Theodore Watts. The great names are to be made the subjects of long and elaborate notices, but the work is to be so complete as to serve also as a book of reference. Several writers who have devoted themselves to English dramatic literature, including Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Gosse, Mr. J. Knight, Prof. J. Nichol, and others, are likely to contribute articles.

MR. BYRON, having devoted a little attention to military science, has come to the conclusion that to break both wings of an army is the best way to make it fly. In regard to the war in Afghanistan he thinks we ought to have an indemnity, as the Ameer will have no lack of rupees.

PROFESSOR MORLEY has been giving some lectures at the London Institution respecting the Stage. “If,” he said, “our playwrights were to

cease to be men of original wit, and become sanitary inspectors and deodorisers, they might as well exercise their powers upon the plays of Dryden, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, or Wycherley, as upon the dramas of Paris." Referring to the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain at the present day, he remarked that for the well-being of the drama he thought that right of interference should be abolished.

THE other night, in the dress circle of a West End theatre, Mr. Whistler—who, by the way, has just been labouring to prove that if critics cannot paint pictures themselves they have no right to criticise painters—sat next to a lady who *would* go out, not only as soon as each act was finished, but also while the play was going on. The space between the rows of seats was very narrow, and the artist was accordingly subjected to much annoyance as she passed him. "Madam," he at length said in his sweetest tones, "I trust I do not incommode you by keeping my seat?"

DURING a rehearsal of *Le Grand Casimir*, Madame Chaumont took it into her head to play her part in a light wig. "I have to tell you," she said to Madame Dumaine, "that I shall come on as a blonde." And so poor Madame Dumaine, who prides herself on her blue eyes and auburn hair, had to wear a very dark wig.

EXTRACT from a New York *Tribune* criticism: "He has dazzled us by his brilliant and perfect technique; he has excited us by his fiery spirit; he has awed us by an indescribable serene sense of force; and he has seized upon our sympathies; and so he has won, by this series of victories over the intellect and affections, a most absolute mastery of his audience." P. S.—"He" played on a fiddle.

"THE man who bolted his door must have been very hungry," soliloquizes Mr. Byron; "hungrier than Otway was when he bolted the fatal half-quartern."

LORD NEWRY, as we announced two months ago, obtained judgment against the estate of the late Mr. H. J. Montague for rent of the Globe Theatre, and enjoined a life insurance company from paying the actor's mother the amount of a policy which he had taken out in her favour. The consequent anxiety has proved fatal to Mrs. Mann, the mother, who was seventy years of age. Lord Newry's reflections can hardly be pleasant.

THE following paragraph has gone the rounds of the New York press:—"The doctor who made the examination of Montague's lungs one hour before his death, and declared them perfectly sound and healthy, afterward sent in his bill for \$150 for his opinion."

THOMAS BADDELEY, the comedian, left £100 Three per Cents. for the purchase of a Twelfth cake and wine, to be partaken of annually by the Drury Lane Company in their Green-room. The ceremony was held in the usual form on Twelfth-night, Mr. Fernandez presiding. The evening was pleasantly spent, though the guests knew they were Baddeley treated.

THE complimentary distinction conferred by a London critic upon the late Mr. Payne, "The King of Pantomime," once led to an amusing mistake. The actor was playing at Madrid during a revolutionary period and a deputation which waited upon him thought he was allied to the English royal family. So at least Mr. Blanchard tells us.

NORTHAMPTON CASTLE, so rich in historical associations, is gradually disappearing to make way for an extension of the London and North Western Railway, and an attempt is being made by local antiquaries to induce the company to save the remaining wall and its postern gate. It is at Northampton Castle that the first scene of *King John* is laid.

MARC FOURNIER, dramatic author, journalist, and theatrical manager, died recently in Paris. He wrote many striking melodramas, but, with the exception of *Paillasse*, from which *Belphegor* was adapted, they were not known to English playgoers. That the late Watts Phillips owed a good deal to this Frenchman's power of dramatic invention there can be no doubt. Improvident and hot-headed, Fournier, notwithstanding the large sums he earned in the course of his career by his writings, died in poverty.

THE story goes that a couple of burglars entered Mr. Garner's house in Gordon-square the other night, and, having been surprised by that gentleman, were despoiled of some hard cash before they could make their escape.

MR. CHARLES SUGDEN has married the ex-Countess of Desart. This *amende* involved a heavy sacrifice on his part, seeing that the lady is possessed of only £2,000 a year. But then Mr. Sugden is a man of honour, whatever may be said of the fact that he frequently accepted the hospitality of the lady's husband.

MR. JAMES MORTIMER has taken the Royalty Theatre, and will open it the first week in February with a new piece by himself. Miss Lydia Cowell will appear in the chief character. Miss Fowler and Mr. Leonard Boyne are engaged in the company.

MR. BOUCICAULT'S *Streets of London* will be revived at the Princess's after the run of *It's Never too Late to Mend*.

MR. FARREN returns to the Vaudeville.

THE London correspondent of the *New York Times* says that Mr. Wills and Mr. Julian Hawthorne recently met at Etretat to talk over a scheme of collaboration in a new drama.

MISS AMY HAWKINS, better known as Miss Amy Roselle, lately had the misfortune to lose her father, formerly an actor and manager.

Polyeucte is being prepared for the English stage by Mr. Pittman. The date of its production here is uncertain.

MR. GEORGE YARNOLD and Mr. G. P. Grainger, the actors, are dead.

L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski is the title of a piece now in rehearsal at the Vaudeville. M. Parade, Madame Pasca, M. Berton, Mdlle. Pierson, and M. Dieudonné are in the cast. The play is an adaptation by M. Cherbuliez of one of his own stories.

Literature.

THE EMPHASIS CAPITALS OF SHAKSPERE.*

THIS is the second of the plays of Shakspeare which Mr. Paton has published under the title of the "Hamnet edition." Macbeth was the first, in the introduction to which he stated his theory of the emphasis capitals (as he calls them) of Shakspeare in the following words:—

It must have occurred to many who have studied his work in the First Folio (1623), that Shakspeare had a rule of distinguishing in his manuscripts by a capital letter every word which ought to be emphasised in order to the bringing out of his full meaning; this system having been originally adopted no doubt for the guidance of players in the delivery of their parts. That this First Folio was in scrupulous accordance with "his own writings" (and not "the copies" with which the public had been thitherto abused) we learn from its dedication; and that these writings were legible and nice in every particular we know through the oft-quoted words of its editors, "We have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." But altogether apart from this assurance, we for ourselves, would have been satisfied that the First Folio was printed from the poet's manuscripts by this one thing, namely, the frequent and invariably intelligent employment of capital letters, quite away from proper names, or the beginnings of lines or sentences, and in situations where these are by no means commonly met with, even in printed books of the same character and period.

Now, in order to prove the truth of this theory, it is necessary that Mr. Paton should show not only that the capitals, which occur undoubtedly with remarkable frequency in the First Folio, coincide with the emphasis which the sense of each passage either allows or demands, but that such exceptional occurrence is applicable, only on the grounds that it was intentional on the part of the author or of the editors of that edition. For, if in searching through the literature of the latter part of the sixteenth and the earlier part of the seventeenth centuries we find capital letters similarly employed by other authors, we must conclude that they were so employed either by chance or design. If by the former, then it is difficult to believe that Shakspeare was alone in his intentional use of such a means of emphasis; if the latter, we must apply to the

* *The Tragedy of Hamlet (Hamnet Edition), according to the First Folio (Spelling Modernized), with Further Remarks on the Emphasis Capitals of Shakspeare.* By Allan Park Paton.

capitals found in other authors the same test that Mr. Paton applies to those of Shakspeare.

Let us take up haphazard one or two of the works of the dramatists of that period. In Middleton and Rowley's *Courtly Masque, or, The World Tost at Tennis* (1620), we find the following lines:—

when the bleake ayre
Bites with an Icy tooth ; when Summer has sear'd,
And Autumne, all discolour'd, layd all Fallow.

Are the capitals in *Icy* and *Fallow* emphasis capitals, or are they not? Again, in *The Noble Soldier*, by Rowley (1634) Act i. sc. 2, we find "Come, be Joviall." Again, Act II. sc. 1:—

Drawing upon my Lordship's Courtly calfe,
Payres of Imbroydred things, &c.

Are the capitals of "Courtly" and "Imbroydred" emphasis capitals? Now take the following lines from Herbert's poems, lines which comprehend as many uses of the emphasis capital as Mr. Paton could possibly desire:—

Behold an Orator, Divinely sage,
The *Prophet* ; and *Apostle* of that age ;
View but his *Porch* and *Temple*, you shall see,
The Body of Divine *Philosophy*.
Examine well the Lines of his dead Face,
Therein you may discern, Wisdom and Grace.
Now if the Shell so lovely doth appear,
How Orient, was the Pearl Imprison'd here.

Now, dismissing entirely the capitals affixed to noun-substantives we have (1) an adverb "Divinely," (2) an adjective "Orient," (3), a verb, "Imprisoned," all distinguished by the capital letter.

We do not think Mr. Paton will venture to deny that we have produced sufficiently remarkable instances of the capital letter being employed "quite away from proper names, or the beginning of lines or sentences" in other works than those of Shakspeare. We do not say that these instances, taken at random, disprove his theory; but we do say that they require some explanation, if they are not instances of the author's caprice or of the printer's carelessness.

With regard to the literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that any definite rule guided either the author or printer in this use of the capital letter. No doubt there are many instances, as Mr. Paton shows most conclusively, in which these eccentric capitals coincide with some very intelligent and remarkable emphasis; but he cannot deny that in many other instances the sense of the passage is not improved by placing the emphasis on those words distinguished

by capital letters. We will give some instances of both kinds from Mr. Paton's selected examples of emphasis capitals.

1st. The following must be allowed to favour, most remarkably, Mr. Paton's theory :—

See

Posthumus Anchors upon Imogen.—(*Cymbeline*, Act v., scene 5.)

To sleep : perchance to Dream.—(*Hamlet*, Act iii., scene 1.)

Let's kill him Boldly, and not Wrathfully.

—(*Julius Cæsar*, Act ii., scene 1.)

With such Prophetic greeting.—(*Macbeth*, Act i., scene 3.)

and perhaps most remarkable of all,

I said an Elder Soldier, not a Better.

Did I say Better ?—(*Julius Cæsar*, Act iv., scene 3.)

On the other hand, we cannot see that the sense of the passage requires any emphasis capital in the following instances :—

My Mother bows

As if Olympus to a Mole-hill should

In supplication Nod.—(*Coriolanus*, Act v., scene 3.)

Now to the capitals of the noun-substantive we have no objection; but why Nod? Surely, the emphasis is as much on "supplication" as on "nod." The contrast is between Olympus and the mole-hill, between his mother and Coriolanus; he says, "My mother bows to me (*i.e.*, she kneels in prayer to me), just as if Olympus should stoop to *supplicate* a mole-hill."

Again,

Were it my Cue to fight, I should have known it

Without a Prompter."

—(*Othello*, Act i., scene 2.)

Surely, the emphasis should be on "fight," not on "Cue."

Again,

Once put out that Light,

* * * * I know not where is that Promethean heat.

Thou can the Light re-Lume.

—(*Othello*, Act v., scene 2.)

Here the capital letter, if given at all to re-lume, should be at the beginning. The question is not of lighting the light, to begin with; it is of "re-lighting" or "re-luming" it when once put out; that is the difficulty.

In this, the last instance we shall quote, Mr. Paton seems to think that an emphasis capital was rightly added in the Fourth Folio to the word "man."

Oh, Heavens, is't possible a young Maid's wits

Should be as mortal, as an old Man's life.

—(*Hamlet*, Act iv., scene 5.)

Now this seems to be a most unfortunate specimen of the emphasis capital, for the contrast is surely more between "young" and "old" than between "maid" and "man."

It seems to us that Mr. Paton has fallen into the not uncommon error of an enthusiast, viz., trying to prove too much. He should, at least if he wishes his remarkable theory to be widely accepted, carefully separate the capricious from the intentional capitals; for it is impossible that he can defend, either as a student or as a public reader of Shakspeare, the emphasis implied by many of the unusual capitals occurring in the First Folio. Again, Mr. Paton's intense reverence for the First Folio induces him to exaggerate its merits, as much as some writers have exaggerated its faults. It is difficult to acquit Heminge and Condell, even on the evidence of the few blunders quoted by Mr. Paton, of neglecting to exercise ordinary care and diligence in correcting the sheets of that edition for the press. If they enjoyed such singular advantages as they did, according to their own account, they ought not to have overlooked mistakes so palpable that persons unacquainted with Shakspeare's handwriting or style, persons unfamiliar with his language or its meaning, might have detected. Two or three mistakes occur owing to a misapprehension, on the printer's or editor's part, of these very emphasis capitals which Mr. Paton believes they so religiously retained. This over-reverence for the First Folio betrays Mr. Paton into a slur on the reputation of the 1604 Quarto of Hamlet, which he speaks of as printed from hurried copies of parts, &c. implying that the First Folio is more correct. This we must take leave to doubt; for we believe, after much study of it, that the 1604 Quarto of Hamlet is the most "true and perfect coppie" of Shakspeare's great tragedy that we possess. It is quite sufficient to remind lovers of Shakspeare that but for that edition we should not possess the noble soliloquy in Act IV. beginning—

How all occasions do inform against me,

of which not a line is to be found in the First Folio. No; let us, by all means, value all the early editions which we possess of any of Shakspeare's works, whether they be in quarto or in folio. There is not one of them which we could be content to spare. Even the despised 1603 Quarto of Hamlet gives us many a passage or reading that adds to our enjoyment of Shakspeare. But let us sincerely congratulate Mr. Paton on having added a most valuable contribution to Shakspearean literature; whether we believe his theory implicitly or only in part, even if we reject it altogether, it cannot be denied that his investigation of these emphasis capitals has resulted in his giving to many passages of Shakspeare a clearer meaning, and in the revelation of many delicate shades of poetical colouring which might otherwise have escaped attention.

MR. SOTHERN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.*

THIS volume, we surmise, is partly from the pen of Mr. Sothorn himself and partly from that of Mr. De Fontaine. Many of the anecdotes with which it abounds are entertaining in themselves and agreeably related, others are but of the froth of wit and humour, and occupy far more space than they deserve. This grievous defect may be laid without hesitation on the shoulders of Mr. De Fontaine, for Mr. Sothorn, as the autobiographical sketches which he contributed to the first number of this magazine will show, can tell a story with excellent effect. The practical jokes perpetrated by and at the expense of the actor have nearly all appeared in print on this side of the Atlantic, but it may be news to the majority of our readers that on his last visit to San Francisco he was stopped at the railway station by some choice spirits disguised as police-officers, arrested in due form on some charge, and conducted to the gates of the city prison. In giving reminiscences of his life Mr. Sothorn does not state the date of his birth. He says that he was educated by Dr. Redhead, a "return" of the English church. He at first studied surgery, but sickening of the scenes he witnessed in the dissecting-room, devoted himself to theology for three years with the intention of becoming a clergyman. Even now, he quietly remarks, "theological books are my favourite reading." Not being theologically sound, he turned his attention to the drama, resolved to seek his fortune on the stage, and came out as Othello at the Theatre Royal, Jersey. A little later he acted Laertes, the Ghost, and the Second Actor in *Hamlet*, in Guernsey; then he played Claude Melnotte, Romeo, and Mercutio in the English provinces. His first appearance in America was as Dr. Pangloss and in the farce of *John Dobbs*. Not long afterwards he went to New York and played with Mr. Barnum at the old Museum. Then he went to the Broadway Theatre, then to the National at Washington, then to Baltimore with Miss Laura Keene. After the Baltimore engagement he was with Mr. Wallack for four years. While here he made his first great success as Armand Duval in *Camille*. The circumstances attending the creation of the part of Lord Dundreary at Miss Keene's theatre were so recently narrated by himself in these pages that we need not refer to them. His career from that time is well known to all who take an interest in stage matters, and even those who do not can hardly fail to be pleased with the little autobiographical work which, in allusion to a paragraph in *Dundreary*, he calls *Birds of a Feather*.

* *Birds of a Feather Flock Together*. By E. A. Sothorn, edited by F. G. De Fontaine. New York: Carleton & Co.

The Theatre.

MARCH 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

THE GRIEVANCES OF THE DRAMATISTS.



OW, if ever, the English dramatists ought to be on their mettle. They are, and they obviously feel that they are, in danger of being for all practical purposes superseded by their French rivals. Whilst their translations and adaptations are received with open arms, their original work is looked upon, at any rate by a majority of the London managers, with decided

suspicion; and the difficulties which they who have made their name encounter in seeking to place satisfactorily their pieces are, of course, intensified and exaggerated for younger dramatists who have their reputation to secure. Two of the leading journals in their remarks upon the condition of the English stage in 1878 took occasion to point out, that since the most successful pieces of the year were borrowed directly from the French theatre, our own playwrights seemed to be either not very popular or not very good; and the inference thus formally drawn is, it must be added, continually drawn by those who discuss the theatre intelligently enough, either in print or in the course of conversation. "Of course, it is from the French?" is a guess hazarded again and again when the subject and probable prospects of a new production are talked over; and by not a few whose generalizations are more bold than wise it seems to be assumed that for all practical purposes we are dependent upon our imports rather than upon our home

manufactures for any fresh artistic wares which may be needed for display upon our stage. The impression, right or wrong, has long been wide-spread, and now that in the revival of interest in the drama it has been authoritatively given in quarters which lend it some weight, it is only natural that the dramatists should come forward and break a lance in their own defence. Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Merivale, besides Mr. Burnand, whose contribution to the discussion we treated last month, have both had something to say on the subject; whilst Mr. Bancroft, approaching the question from another side, denies that English playwrights have at the Prince of Wales's, the Court, or the Vaudeville Theatre been badly treated or neglected by managers.

The gist of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's letter to *The Times* last month was that "as to authors who have an established reputation in their calling" it is "most unfair" to require—as London managers do nowadays—"that an original play shall be submitted to them in a complete form before they will entertain the question of producing it." Mr. Gilbert instanced what we cannot but think the unfortunate analogy of a first-rate tailor, who, he thinks, "would stare if you proposed to him that he should make you a suit of clothes on approval." As a matter of fact, tailors and such-like tradesmen *do* make their wares "on approval,"—a condition which is implied whenever their customers send back a coat or a pair of boots as a hopeless misfit. For these misfits, even though they were thrown on his hands at a complete loss, the tradesman would never dare charge; and if he attempted to enforce his claim, he would certainly be worsted in the County-court. But although there seems to be a flaw in Mr. Gilbert's good-humoured argument here, there is none in his contention that a dramatist of position ought not to be asked to submit to a condition appropriate only to the efforts of the tyro. The cause which has doubtless led London managers to demand this more often than they used to do is found in the fact that they have been spoiled by the special applicability of this system to the borrowing of plays from Paris. Here they not only see the work in its completed form, but can actually judge of its dramatic effects—which few can do from a MS. play—and of its power of attracting the public. They have had the all-important test applied at some one else's risk, and now only have to pay for a success which is pretty well assured. Signs, however, are not wanting that the evil which thus places English authors at a distinct disadvantage is in a fair way to right itself. We have heard of late of not a few instances where popular French dramatists, perceiving which way the wind blows, have taken care to make their London market betimes, and have declined to wait

until the issue of their Paris production before assigning the right of adaptation. As the law of copyright becomes better regulated and better understood we may be sure that French playwrights will avail themselves more and more of this method of securing a double profit; and English managers will find, when they have to run the chance of buying a pig in a poke, in Paris as well as in London, that on the whole their safest market is the one nearest home. For it must never be forgotten that whilst we hear, till we are tired of hearing, of the new French plays which prove successful, we hear little or nothing of the infinitely larger number which fail.

Passing from Mr. Gilbert's argument to that of Mr. Bancroft, we find a very fair case made out for the encouragement which he and Mr. Hare have given to English dramatic authors. Against three adaptations, *Peril*, *Diplomacy*, and *The Vicarage*, he can set thirteen new and original English plays, and six revivals of English plays given in the last thirteen years, whilst at the Court Theatre the proportion is two to seven. The actual fact thus set forth has not improbably astonished many of those to whose attention it is brought, and it may make them wonder how their impression to the contrary can have originated. In justice, however, to those who have urged the undue preponderance of adaptations, it should be observed that the pieces of French origin all came in a cluster during the past three or four years, and that they, together with the revivals, seemed to be of the nature of a protest against such a failure as that of Mr. Byron's *Wrinkles*. Mr. Bancroft proves satisfactorily that he is not one of the managers deserving of Mr. Gilbert's implied reproaches; but he is surely on ground less safe when in a cynical vein he protests that the argument concerning the origin of the plays produced for our entertainment is of the very slightest interest to the London playgoer. Doubtless, as he goes on to argue, the *entrepreneur* is justified in procuring for the delectation of his patrons good plays wherever good plays may be found, whilst he would be to blame if he withheld the worthiest dramatic work, simply because it chanced to be foreign. But can it be denied that it is of the very utmost importance that, *cæteris paribus*, the English original playwright should have at least as good a chance as his French rival of having his work produced upon our stage? What argument can be of more serious moment to the future welfare and vitality of our drama than one which seeks to determine its relative position, its right to encouragement, and the extent of the disabilities under which it is supposed to labour? If, indeed, as Mr. Bancroft asserts, the London playgoer "cares but little about the source whence his entertainment is derived," he will amply deserve any deprivation of æsthetic pleasures which

may be in store for him as a punishment; but, judging from his utterances on the subject, his ignorant recklessness does not go so far as the manager of the Prince of Wales's seems to believe.

Yet another view of the question is that suggested in a very interesting letter from Mr. H. C. Merivale, whose best stage work was found in *The White Pilgrim*, which failed at the Court Theatre principally through faults not its own. Mr. Merivale is right in his complaint on behalf of himself and his brother authors, that there is something depressing in the "feeling that as literary men they will be neither criticised nor read." It is perfectly true that English readers prefer dialogue in its undramatic form; they do not really care for the perusal of any but those classical plays which they have to study, or to skim as part of a polite education. He is fully justified in affirming that the most trumpery three-volume novel finds more readers than does the best of the innumerable good dramas of all sorts and descriptions which may be purchased at French's for sixpence each. But when he goes on to compare the interest aroused by the perusal of plays like those of Scribe, of Sardou, or of Dumas the younger, with that which is to be derived from reading the works of Planché, of Robertson, or of Boucicault, he seems to overstate his case. The whole matter is of course one of opinion only; but it seems to us that whilst most of the comedies by MM. Sardou and Dumas and Scribe will charm their readers, a very minimum of intellectual enjoyment is to be got out of Robertson's *Society* or Boucicault's *Colleen Bawn*—to quote two of Mr. Merivale's examples—when they are taken up in the study. The fact, however, that Mr. Merivale proves, or tries to prove, too much, does not vitiate his suggestion that our playwrights find a difficulty in getting their works judged as literary productions; and this statement, the truth of which can readily be attested by direct evidence, may throw some light upon our managers' well-known difficulty in forming a just opinion of the MSS. submitted to their inspection. After all, however, laudable although Mr. Merivale's ambition to take his place as a dramatic poet may be, his grievance may almost be pronounced sentimental by the side of that of his confrères. As a matter of fact, the dramatic authors of the present day may be divided into two classes, those who write exclusively with a view to stage-representation, and those who appeal chiefly, if not exclusively, to the reading public. Few of our successful modern plays would stand the test of perusal, Mr. W. S. Gilbert's blank verse fairy-plays being perhaps the only really readable dramas which have of late made their mark upon our stage. Some of the most delightful verse which any living author has given to our theatre is to be found

in Mr. Albery's *Oriana*, as decided a failure on the stage as was *The White Pilgrim*; but we doubt very much whether *The Two Roses*, by which Mr. Albery first made his name, would delight or even interest its readers.

“NEW” AND “ORIGINAL” PLAYS.

THE action brought against us by Mr. Reece has ended in a manner satisfactory to both sides. In the autumn of 1877, it may be remembered, a play by the plaintiff and Mr. Farnie, entitled *Hester Gray*, was brought out at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester. It was described in the programmes as “new,” and as having been “written expressly for Miss Wallis.” The local journals and the correspondents of two London papers treated it as an entirely new play; that is to say, set forth its plot at considerable length. In the course of a few days the *Manchester Guardian* published a paragraph to the effect that *Hester Gray* bore a close resemblance to *Ruth Oakley*, performed at the Marylebone Theatre twenty years previously. “The plot,” the writer said, “is the same, the leading situations are the same, the principal characters are different in name only; even the dialogue has been, in many cases, left substantially unaltered. There are, indeed, points of divergence in the two plays; but they are of comparatively slight importance. Had the authors of *Hester Gray* styled their work an adaptation, or in any way acknowledged their indebtedness to the authors of *Ruth Oakley*, there would have been less reason to complain; but, as it is, no such excuse can be offered for a very glaring literary offence.” This paragraph we quoted in *The Theatre* without any comment, and with an intimation that we were willing to give equal publicity to any explanation which might be offered. Thereupon, in a letter to a contemporary, Mr. Reece stated that neither he nor Mr. Farnie had ever seen or heard *Ruth Oakley*, and that *Hester Gray* was “directly founded” upon a French melodrama called *La Mendiante*. The dialogue, he added, was entirely original, and the “suppression of their indebtedness to *La Mendiante* was no part of their wish or understanding.” This letter effectually disposed of the charge of plagiarising from *Ruth Oakley*, but at the same time it raised the important question whether a play which is “directly founded” upon another, foreign or English, can fairly be described as “new” and “written expressly for” a particular actor or actress. In an article upon this subject we remarked:—“We may take it as generally accepted that the playwright who adapted a play from the French,—or, indeed, went back to the Spanish for his material,—would scarcely hold him-

self justified in claiming originality for his work. To call work of this order 'original' would be a distinct and generally admitted fraud; and it certainly seems to us that to call it 'new,' unless with a qualifying reference to the fact that it is only an adaptation, is equally unjustifiable." Mr. Reece and Mr. Farnie took proceedings against us for libel, not only on account of the quotation from the *Manchester Guardian* and the sentences given above, but also because, through a little over-zeal in our office, the placards and advertisements of the number containing the accusation in regard to *Ruth Oakley* stated that a "serious charge" had been brought against those gentlemen. Mr. Farnie, for his own reasons, withdrew from the action soon afterwards, but Mr. Reece elected to proceed. The case was heard before Mr. Justice Lopes on the 20th of February. Though the justice of our criticism was admitted by the judge and in effect by the plaintiff and his witnesses, we did not shrink from expressing the regret we felt at the appearance of the advertisements referred to, and so by mutual consent a juror was withdrawn.

The question which lay at the root of the case was virtually determined in our favour. Mr. Reece disclaimed the responsibility of having drawn up the programme of *Hester Gray*, but called three witnesses—Mr. Palgrave Simpson, Mr. Tom Taylor, and Mr. Hollingshead—to prove that it was the practice to term an unacknowledged adaptation a new play. Mr. Taylor said there was a recognised distinction between "new" and "original," and that every play presented for the first time to the British public in a novel form was "new." The *scenario* of *Hester Gray*, though derived from the *Mendicante*, was, in dramatic parlance, a "new" work. In cross-examination, the plaintiff's witnesses made some important admissions. Mr. Simpson said he had publicly avowed the source of the majority of his adaptations from the French. Mr. Taylor confessed that from the description given in court of *Hester Gray* he should not have called it a "new" piece, and that he did not regard a copy of a picture as a new picture. Mr. Hollingshead frankly stated that of the practice to which he had deposed he did not approve. It had been modified of late years; for some French authors who had made a reputation in England stipulated that their names should appear in the bills, and managers, less from honesty than motives of interest, acceded to the condition. Even more to our purpose was what Mr. Reece stated in cross-examination. The construction of *La Mendicante*, he said, was followed in *Hester Gray*, as were some effective portions of the dialogue. If he had had to write the play-bill of *Hester Gray* he should have described the piece as a new version of *La Mendicante*. He had never described, and never would describe, an adaptation from the French as a "new" play. In

allowing as much as this Mr. Reece abandoned his chief position,—namely, that *The Theatre* was not justified in adversely criticizing him on the strength of *Hester Gray* being announced as it was. Above all, if the case had not ended with the speech for the defence by Mr. Edward Clarke,—to whom, we may here say, our warmest thanks are due for his temperate yet effective advocacy,—Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Byron, Mr. Hare, and Mr. Moy Thomas would have stated in the witness-box that in their opinion the custom of styling unacknowledged adaptations “new” was honoured more in the breach than the observance; and, if circumstances had permitted it, Mr. Burnand and Mr. Sala would have been present to give similar testimony.

It is not too much to expect that the advantage we have gained will have a salutary effect. Down to a very recent period it was the practice of nearly every dramatic author to call an adaptation a “new” play and withhold the name of the original. Five out of six of the pieces produced a few years ago were taken from the French without the slightest acknowledgment of the obligation. But it must not be thought that because a custom is old we are always free to follow it. There was a time when a man was not thought any the worse of if he got drunk and made a noise in the streets at midnight; now, however, the offence would be deemed inconsistent with anything like respectability. Many old customs observed at the present time will die out as the standard of morality is advanced; and amongst them, we think, may be numbered the custom deposed to in Westminster Hall by Mr. Taylor and Mr. Simpson. For the doctrine that a play which is not original may be honestly described as “new” can hardly meet with acceptance much longer. No dramatist who respects himself and his vocation would turn to practical account the plot and characters of another piece, style the result a “new” work and yet conceal the importance of his obligation, and on the secret being discovered avail himself of the plea that the word “original” is not to be found in the programme. Moreover, what do the play-going public as a body understand by the term in question? Dramatic critics and all persons versed in theatrical matters know full well that “new” is not intended to mean “original,” but there can be no doubt that outside this rather small circle the two terms are regarded as synonymous. The ordinary playgoer assumes a “new” play to be “original,” and will not consider that he is fairly treated if he finds it to be a version of one he has seen in a Continental capital. These remarks do not apply to Mr. Reece, who, it should be borne in mind, declared that he would never call an adaptation a “new” play, and was not aware until some days after *Hester Gray* appeared that it had been so announced. In taking up this

question we were actuated by a desire, not to attract public attention to *The Theatre*, as the leading counsel for the plaintiff suggested we had been, but to relieve the English drama from the reproach which a long course of unavowed indebtedness to foreign plays has brought upon it. That we have failed to attain our object can hardly be averred. Mr. Reece, and more than one of the witnesses he called, were constrained to admit that it was not right to call an adaptation "new" without mentioning its source; Mr. Justice Lopes showed that he was of the same view; and the most prominent of living dramatic authors came to the Court with a representative manager and a representative critic to give evidence in our favour. The custom against which we took up the pen sixteen months ago has been authoritatively condemned, and a very prevalent impression on the Continent—namely, that English dramatists, one and all, are prone to appropriate the ideas of foreign contemporaries without acknowledging the debt—will be appreciably modified.

THE DRURY LANE DISASTER.

THE circumstances in which Drury Lane Theatre closed the other day are calculated to suggest the improbability of its being re-opened, at any rate, under the conditions of its recent management. The pantomime, which would still in the ordinary course of things have continued its career till the end of February, if not till the middle of March, had been kindly treated by the whole of the press, and had been regarded by the public as fairly successful. It was not perhaps so prettily told as some of Mr. E. L. Blanchard's versions of nursery legends, but its "book" was a work of art beside those of its rivals. It was not mounted with any great elaboration or brilliance of scenic effect; indeed, some of its "effects" were from this point of view, and when compared with similar effects at other houses, open to the charge of dinginess and meanness. But, on the other hand, the absence of meaningless spectacular display was felt by many to be a relief, especially as the illustration was appropriate and adequate to all the real requirements of the piece. Moreover, the company engaged included a family of clever and popular artists who are the leading representatives of the modern pantomimic school, excelling as they do in the various kinds of "business" now added to pantomime pure and simple. It may be that the public is getting tired of seeing Mr. Fred. Vokes throw his leg over the heads of his sisters Victoria

and Jessie, and it is certain that the departure of Miss Rosina Vokes from the little troupe was a loss from which it has never recovered. But notwithstanding these drawbacks the Vokeses are great favourites with playgoers, as any one who visited the pantomime of *Cinderella*, either on Boxing-night or any subsequent evening, could readily see for himself. On the whole, then, the Christmas entertainment provided at Drury Lane gave every indication of meeting with and deserving considerable success, and it would surprise most people to learn that it was a pecuniary failure. Yet early in February, and when the pantomime had still three weeks to run, the theatre suddenly closed, to the surprise of most of the members of the company and to the dismay of all. This premature closing has been followed by the petition of the lessee and manager for the liquidation of his affairs; the amount of his debts being roughly estimated at £40,000 as against assets which seemed to the Registrar to consist chiefly, if not entirely, of copyright dramatic manuscripts. The catastrophe shadowed forth by the sudden withdrawal of the pantomime is thus complete.

It would perhaps be impertinent to inquire whether any success which the pantomime of 1878-9 might have been reasonably expected to secure in its last month could possibly have enabled the manager to tide over such a financial crisis as this; but unless an affirmative answer be given to the question it is difficult to see why any deficiencies in the pantomime need be blamed for the unfortunate result. A pantomime might fairly pay its way and yet do very little towards removing such a millstone of debt as this from the neck of the sanguine *entrepreneur*. From many remarks, however, which have appeared in various journals it would seem to be the impression that some lack of attractiveness in *Cinderella* was primarily in fault, whilst the immediate cause of the closing was the selfishness of Mr. Vokes in refusing to consent to the reduction of his own and his sisters' salaries which had become necessary. The cruelty of thus allowing hundreds of poor *employés* to be thrown out of their expected work has been commented upon; the opinion has been freely expressed in print that some arrangement ought to have been come to by which the premature close of the season might be averted, and the manager has in several quarters been spoken of as a much ill-used man.

Now, in fairness not only to the Vokeses, but to the author of the pantomime and to others connected with its production, it must be pointed out that even if *Cinderella* was not strikingly remunerative, it was at all events a pecuniary triumph beside *The Winter's Tale*. Over a Shakspearean season like this it is certain that money must have been lost—money which the manager probably

expected to recoup from a season of a very different order. Indeed we may fairly take it for granted that had Shakspeare not in this instance spelt ruin in the autumn, no proposal would in the winter have been made to the pantomimists that they should suddenly submit to a considerable reduction of their salaries. It must be confessed that it is rather hard upon exponents of what may, without offence, be called the illegitimate drama to ask them to suffer for the shortcomings of the legitimate drama. It was not, they may have said to themselves, their fault that the representation of *The Winter's Tale* fell flat. They had worked hard, and were prepared to work; they were admittedly the life and soul of the pantomime, so far as it had a life and soul; they had a right to be fully paid for labours which had fully attained their object. The manner, moreover, in which the proposal of half-salaries was made to the company appears to have been anything but considerate and gracious, as it seems to have been assumed that without being taken into the confidence of the manager the players would blindly and instantly agree to have their remuneration reduced by fifty per cent. We have only to imagine what we should say to a similar reduction of our incomes, even for the short space of three weeks, in order to make due allowance for any mistake which may have been committed by those who were asked to suffer for the benefit of others.

But when all due weight has been given to the plea implied by Mr. Vokes's letter in a contemporary, in which he strives to exonerate himself from the charge of meanness and uncharitableness, it must still be admitted that, in all the circumstances of the case, he would have behaved much more gratefully and gracefully if he had accepted the proposition made to him; for that he had power to do so on behalf of his sisters as well as of himself seems proved by his offer of the services of the family gratis for a week's performance. The amount of money which Mr. Chatterton must now have paid to the Vokeses is very large, and it must not be forgotten that to the opportunities which he gave them in years gone by their reputation is largely due. Doubtless they gave good value for their pay; but it would have been well if, for the sake of auld lang syne, they had been willing to give something more. Even, however, if we assume that the offer of a week's performance without remuneration fairly met the requirements of the case, so far as Mr. Vokes's actual sacrifice was concerned, we must bear in mind that this arrangement could not be accepted as enabling the manager to keep his theatre open. All the company, except the Vokeses and a clown named Lauri, were willing to take the half-salary offered, and all the company were thrown suddenly out of work in consequence of the attitude

which Mr. Vokes assumed. Under such circumstances it might, perhaps, have been better if Mr. Vokes had not stood upon his right of offering assistance to the struggling manager after his own fashion. It is tolerably clear, however, that if the actor did not do all that he might have done, he received little immediate inducement to make the sacrifice demanded of him; and a very little tact and consideration on either side would probably have sufficed to bring the meeting of the 7th February on the Drury Lane stage to a friendly conclusion.

But whatever steps might have been taken towards lessening the cost of playing the pantomime night after night, the ruin of the Drury Lane manager could not have been averted for long by any such trifling assistance. It needs a stronger crutch than this would have been to support a manager under the burden of a debt of £40,000. The only wonder to our minds is, not that Mr. Chatterton has failed, but that he had not failed long ago. The old theatre is, considering the state of its repair, let at a ridiculously high rent and under absurd conditions. No man could have striven more courageously or by more varied means to make it pay than has Mr. Chatterton. He has tried everything, from Shakspeare to Mr. Andrew Halliday, and he has in his misfortune only followed the road trodden by plenty of bankrupt Drury Lane managers before him. The hungry proprietors and renters may seek a long time before they find for their old-fashioned and over-rated theatre a tenant so satisfactory as Mr. Chatterton has been ever since he first took the house; and it is highly probable that his failure is the last of which there will be any chance at old Drury during the rest of the short period for which it exists as a theatre.

Portraits.

XV.—MISS WALLIS.

EIGHT or nine years ago an important event occurred in a seminary at Highgate, situated near the country residence of the lady whose benevolence has made her name a household word wherever the English language is spoken. The holidays had at length arrived, and in accordance with time-honoured custom a performance in dumb show was given by some of the pupils before a select assemblage of relatives and friends in the school-room. The scene represented was that of the death of Cleopatra, the principal character being intrusted to Miss Wallis, then about fifteen years of age. The girl's acting was expressive and even powerful; the performance ended amidst quite a little shower of applause, and the schoolmistress, approaching the heroine of the evening with a sorrowful look, said there was but too much reason to fear that before long she "would tread the boards." Not long afterwards Miss Wallis recited the "May Queen" and "Dora" at an entertainment got up by a clergyman in aid of the funds of a local charity, and it was then found that to the gifts displayed in the school performance she united a rare aptitude for elocution. The school-mistress's prediction was soon realized, sooner, perhaps, than was expected. Miss Wallis, yielding to an imperious instinct, resolved to seek her fortune on the stage. Her parents were opposed to her wishes, but eventually said that if a competent judge of acting should be of opinion that she had the necessary qualifications, they would waive their objections. The gentleman selected to decide the question was Mr. John Ryder, before whom Miss Wallis recited the potion scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. The result need hardly be stated. Mr. Ryder had no hesitation in declaring that a brilliant future awaited her,—provided, of course, that she had the advantage of a regular training. Her parents proved as good as their word; they acquiesced in her choice of a profession, and, moreover, went to the expense of having her educated for the stage by Mr. Ryder. In 1872 Miss Wallis appeared under an assumed name at the Standard Theatre, and soon afterwards under her own name at the Queen's as Marguerite, in Sir Charles Young's *Montcalm*, Mildred Vaughan in *Amos Clark*, and Elizabeth in Colonel Richard's *Cromwell*. That she had not mistaken her vocation was abundantly evident; indeed, it is not too much to say that before long she occupied an enviable place in her profession. In the autumn of 1873 she appeared at Drury Lane as the "Serpent of Old Nile," in the revival of Shak-



THE THEATRE NO. 9 NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE

Very truly
Edm. Lancaster Wallis

spere's *Antony and Cleopatra*, an event which supplies the best proof of the rapidity of the progress she had made, and to which the incident at the school at Highgate lends additional interest. Her performance justified many friendly prognostications. "The success of Miss Wallis," wrote Mr. Oxenford in the *Times*, "was the histrionic event of the evening. No one was prepared for the amount of passion and power she displayed in one of Shakspeare's most responsible parts, and which are in her wedded with that invaluable quality, distinctness of articulation." The news of her success in so high a walk of the drama doubtless occasioned some excitement at Highgate, and it may be presumed that the schoolmistress, though not in favour of the playhouse, was led by very natural curiosity to pay a visit to Drury Lane Theatre before *Antony and Cleopatra* was withdrawn. By performances of Juliet and Amy Robsart, Miss Wallis sensibly strengthened her position, and in the spring of 1874 she went upon what proved to be a prosperous provincial tour. Returning to Drury Lane, she played Edith in *Richard Cœur de Lion*, Juliet, and Mrs. Ford. In 1876, after another tour in the country, she married Mr. Lancaster, a manufacturer in the North, and, in fulfilment of a promise made to him some time previously, did not re-appear on the stage for a year. She then made a round of the provinces for the third time, and in the autumn of 1878 played Hermione, Imogen, and other characters at Drury Lane. In the country Miss Wallis's name is associated with many parts in which she has not been seen in London—Rosalind, Norma, Parthenia, Julia, Margaret Elmore, and Mariana. In only one character—Lady Macbeth—can she be said to have failed or approached a failure; her Juliet and her Rosalind are impersonations of a very high order. Nevertheless, she has yet much to learn and unlearn. The means by which her effects are produced are not always concealed from the spectator. Her acting is sometimes hard and unsympathetic, for the reason that she is disposed rather to go by rote than follow the bent of her own instincts. But against these defects—which, it is only fair to state, are not incurable—we have more than a sufficient set-off. Miss Wallis, as the critic of the *Scotsman* once remarked, has soul,—can identify herself with a passion in such a way that it shall really seem to inspire her words and gestures. She understands the meaning and value of artistic reserve, of that restraint upon the expression of even the most tempestuous gusts of feeling which in dramatic representation is essential to the highest effect. Her features, no less than her voice, are capable of a very considerable range of expression, and a well-trained ear enables her to declaim with a true feeling for rhythm and the music of verse.

The Round Table.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIETY UPON THE STAGE.

BY FRANK A. MARSHALL.

IN a short review which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 17th of February last, I came across the following passage:—"In itself the vocation of the actor is as legitimate as that of the sculptor or musician; but in England, as elsewhere, it has too often been associated with what is morally objectionable. There is nothing, for example, in English literature more opposed to what is honest and of good report than the drama of the Restoration. . . . The horror expressed for the stage by men like Jeremy Collier was not without warrant; and at a later period the conduct of many popular actresses led some moralists to think that on the stage contamination was inevitable." Here was the old cant about the stage cropping up again, stated in very moderate and thoroughly "respectable" language. "Better days have followed," adds the writer; nor is there reason to believe that he is one of the pharisaical denouncers of the morality of theatres. Still the sight of these familiar arguments in a contemporary journal, not hitherto suspected of any Methodistical tendency, set me thinking whether this oft-repeated complaint of the corrupting tendency of the stage is just or unjust. The conclusion to which I have come is one that has often occurred to me before, when reading some of those pious denunciations of theatres with which the mountebanks of the pulpit, from time to time favour us; and it is that Society, especially fashionable Society, has again and again tried its utmost to corrupt the stage, but that in the worst times it has only imperfectly succeeded.

Let us go back to the earliest times of the drama. Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides cannot be accused of anything approaching to immorality. They did nothing to degrade, but a great deal to elevate, the moral tone of their audiences. Aristophanes was coarse, and called the public bad names; but he did his best to rouse them by the vigour of his satire into some show of patriotism. Of Menander and the Greek writers of comedy we know little, save through their Latin imitators. Plautus and Terence wrote with considerable freedom, but the morality of their comedies was far above that of the society of their day. The testimony of St. Augustine, in his "Confessions," goes far to prove that, even in his

time, the corruption of society forced itself upon the stage, and not that of the stage on society. What he says as to the prejudicial effect of spurious emotions would apply to reading epic poems, quite as forcibly as to witnessing dramatic representations. The early Italian dramatists of the sixteenth century can be accused of nothing more culpable than a tendency to dulness; their anxiety to avoid any imputation of immorality may be seen in the curious declarations which are often found prefixed to their plays.

We now come to the Elizabethan drama. Many detached passages could be produced from the works of Marlowe, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Marston, Ford, Massinger, and even from Shakspeare, to prove that the writers were often guilty of immodesty; but, with the exception of Ford, I do not think any of their plays could be accused of an immoral tendency. They do not teach that right is wrong, or wrong right; they do not seek to corrupt mankind either by undermining their religious belief, or by weakening the ties of family affection, or by bringing the laws of social morality into contempt. A curious circumstance is to be noted in connexion with the morality of the dramatists of that age. Those most closely connected with the theatre, either as actors or managers, seem to have been most anxious to protest against any attempt to turn the drama into a vehicle for pandering to impurity. The most indecent plays are, as a rule, those which were written by outsiders, so to speak,—by aristocratic intruders into the republic of letters. I was astonished to find that the indecent passages in the play scene of *Hamlet* are omitted in the earlier quarto (1603)—which bears every sign of being a rude acting-edition of the play—as well as in the version used by Betterton. The “sallets,” or “spicy,” portions of Shakspeare’s dialogues were, I firmly believe, inserted to please the taste of the more fashionable portion of his audience or of his readers, and were generally omitted by the actors themselves. Neither the drama nor its surroundings in Shakspeare’s time can be fairly charged with any corrupting tendency; on the contrary, the morality inculcated on the stage was quite as high, if not higher, than that preached from the pulpit by a time-serving clergy, or practised by their devout congregations.

I come now to the comedy of the Restoration, for the morality of which little can be said, inasmuch as its tendency, broadly speaking, either when read and acted, must be to corrupt the mind. Yet in these plays there are tributes to virtue which show that the writers would not, or dared not, set all moral laws at defiance. Surely, it is scarcely true that “there is nothing in English literature more opposed to what is honest and of good report” than the drama of the Restoration. Some, at least, of the poetry of that period was far more

immoral. Rochester, Carew, and others who might be mentioned, did more to pollute the minds of youth than did Wycherley and Congreve. To come to later times, and to omit all mention of those atheistical works which have deformed so many moral natures by destroying the very source of all the highest and purest emotions of humanity, is not such a book as *Ferdinand Count Fathom* more pernicious than any play? What shall we say of the rabid blasphemies which Shelley, to the grief of all his admirers, published; or of the scoffing libertinism of *Don Juan*? What, to come to our own times, of those mixtures of æsthetic gibberish and flatulent infidelity, flavoured with the worst, because the most unmanly, indecency which, in the form of poetry or prose, have adorned the literature of recent years? Surely the influence of such works as these is more opposed to "all that is honest and of good report" than anything that the English stage has ever produced.

But let us look at the history of this comedy of the Restoration. Who were the authors of it? Wycherley was a man of fashion; Congreve a fine gentleman; Vanbrugh an aristocratic architect. Very different men these from Shakspeare or Ben Jonson. Farquhar, who is improperly classed among the dramatists of the Restoration,—seeing that his first play was produced ten years after the accession of King William III.,—was, unlike his three predecessors, a thorough Bohemian, and had been an actor. His comedies are less witty and indecent, but more genial and humorous than theirs; and to him belongs the honour of being the first to attempt the re-introduction of a sound moral tone into a comedy. How was the attempt received by his fashionable patrons? They resented the liberty, and did all they could to damn his *Inconstant* because it was "a moral play." Jeremy Collier would have done far better to have castigated the audience who came to see Wycherley and Congreve's plays than the actors or the authors of them.

The licentiousness of society, not the corrupting influence of the drama, was clearly responsible for the libertinism of these comedies. What was it which rendered such licentiousness so brazen-faced and so general? The influence of players, of actresses, of dramatic authors, of the evil surroundings of the stage? Nothing of the sort: the profligacy of Charles II. and of his Court was the direct result of reaction, as natural as any ordinary function of human nature, from the monstrous hypocrisy of Puritanism, with its soul-destroying persecution of all innocent mirth and wholesome amusements; its hideous parody of piety; its cruel persistence in attempting to deform the mind and heart of youth from a storehouse of happiness and a well-spring of benevolence into a dungeon of melancholy and a Dead-Sea of bitterness.

“The conduct of many popular actresses at a later period” doubtless was very reprehensible. I suppose the writer refers to the latter half of the eighteenth century. But was the conduct of the actresses, as a whole, worse than the conduct of the ladies of society? With whom was it that they formed *liaisons*,—with the actors, or with the ornaments and leaders of society? If the confessions of George Anne Bellamy were shameless, what shall we say of those of Constantia Phillips? The latter lady was not in any way connected with the stage, but she will certainly bear away the palm for a “pretty style of confession” from her dramatic rival. Constantia, by the way, was first corrupted by the worthy son of Lord Chesterfield, the very youth to whom those beautiful *compendia* of morality, the celebrated Letters, were addressed. At the time when the profligacy of some of the actresses gained for the stage so unenviable a reputation what was the state of things behind the scenes? The most fashionable men of the day sat in rows, two or three deep, on the stage, and went in and out of the Green-room and of the dressing-rooms like tame cats. What a nuisance they must have been! They employed the opportunities thus offered them of association with the actresses in corrupting as many as they could. Anybody who has read the curious social memoirs of the latter half of the last century will remember the scandalous state of things which existed behind the scenes. Who first put an end to this scandal? No dignitary of the Court, no virtuous member of fashionable society, no fearless preacher; but an actor, David Garrick; and a great deal of difficulty he had in effecting such an excellent reform. We owe to another actor-manager in later times an equally great moral reform, effected this time amongst the audience in front of the curtain. The boxes and corridors of our principal theatres were once very much what the galleries of the Argyll Rooms used to be. It was an actor-manager at Drury Lane who first, if I am not mistaken, set the example of purifying those portions of the house of their objectionable frequenters. Thus much in answer to those who denounce the stage of the past as a corruptor of morals; with the stage of the present time I hope to deal in a subsequent article.

THE MAGISTRATES AND THE MUSIC-HALLS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

THE deputation from the Middlesex magistrates who, a week or two ago, interviewed the Home Secretary, do not appear to have had a very clear idea of the very serious consequences which

would probably ensue on the compliance with their request. What they want simply comes to this—that all music and dancing-halls should be put under the strict supervision of the police, or of some other person or persons to be forthwith brought into existence by the Legislature, and that any such establishment “harbouring” persons of bad character should be promptly and ruthlessly suppressed.

It is by no means necessary, in briefly considering this question, to impute, as has been too frequently done, any but the best motives to the gentlemen who have taken steps in this matter, or to quarrel with them because one happens to be of a different way of thinking. For my part I cannot help feeling a sort of respect for them, if it is only because they have the courage of their opinions. But it is impossible to avoid expressing amazement that, at this time of day, any body of men with so many opportunities of obtaining experience as to the life of a great city as the Middlesex magistrates, should contain so many amiable Quixotes as Major Lyon and his colleagues. The task they have set themselves—which is nothing less than the suppression of immorality in a city of about four millions of inhabitants—is one to which the resuscitation of chivalry is easy, and the tilting at windmills a mere joke. The windmill might stop, and something, perhaps, might be done with it; but immorality goes on for ever, and all the Middlesex magistrates put together can do nothing with *that*, except that, like all forces, however vast and however destructive, it can be governed, and regulated, and kept within bounds. But to sit upon the safety-valve has never been considered a very safe method of travelling, and we all know what is likely to happen when people hide noxious matters away in a corner, and complacently assume that they have ceased to exist because they are out of sight. The poison remains, and must remain. The only way to neutralise it and to prevent its fatal action is wisely, if sorrowfully, to admit its existence, and to surround it carefully with safeguards and preventives.

Possibly the answer will be made to this view of the case that the very course that commends itself to people of this way of thinking is the course that is now being taken by the magistrates; but a statement made by one of their own body, on the occasion of the visit to Mr. Cross, seems to bear out the view just expressed, and to show that they themselves are by no means agreed as to what results they are bringing about. Major Lyon said—to quote from *The Times*’ report—“He thought the last sessions, when the Argyll Rooms were closed, had done some good; but there was very great difficulty in getting evidence.” On the other hand, Sir J. Heron

Maxwell, replying to Mr. Cross's inquiry as to what, in fact, had been the result of closing the Argyll Rooms, "was afraid it had had the effect of driving the bad characters to other places, some of which, he believed, were ten times worse than the Argyll Rooms." Precisely so. There is no doubt about it.

Let us see how this matter really stands.

For some years the Middlesex magistrates, in a spasmodic sort of way which did not make it appear as if they were pursuing a distinct line of policy, but rather as if they acted when the humour took them, and remained passive when it did not, have been closing places of amusement which were, in their opinion, frequented by too many "bad characters." The simple result has been that they have, surely if slowly, concentrated the whole of the trouble in one place. The Holborn Casino went first, then Highbury Barn was disestablished, then Cremorne was closed. The Argyll Rooms for some inscrutable reason survived, and, having a monopoly of the business—greatly to the profit of its proprietor—drove a roaring trade and prospered exceedingly. Presently the inevitable result came about. The place became an intolerable nuisance and a public scandal, and was eventually, and most justly, suppressed. But in what respect have public morals and public decency benefited? The streets in the neighbourhood of the Haymarket, Coventry-street, Waterloo-place, Leicester-square, and other important thoroughfares, which the Middlesex magistrates cannot suppress, became worse and worse. The crying scandal of London—a scandal which would not be tolerated for a week in any great capital abroad—was only increased. What was once only a flagrant nuisance late at night is now almost intolerable at quite an early hour of the evening. The "bad characters" have been turned out of one place after another, where the decent people were under no obligation to go, and now succeed in making night, and evening, hideous in the public streets, where business or the pursuit of harmless pleasure compel many innocent people to be, whether or no. Is this a desirable state of things, or is the closing of all music-halls and other places out of which the bad characters of the magistrates cannot be kept at all likely to benefit the body politic? I, for one, cannot believe it.

The remedy for this state of things, in the opinion of some of the Middlesex wise men, lies in a greater display of activity on the part of the police, and there is no doubt a good deal to be said, plausibly enough, in support of this view. The police could undoubtedly mitigate the nuisance to some extent, supposing, let us say, among other things, that they had a little more sympathy and assistance from the public. But, as a matter of fact, the

“moving on” principle in matters of this sort will not do. In the case of poor Jo and his like it may be well enough. When you have moved them on enough, and they can bear it no longer, they lie down and die. But your social nuisance moves on cheerily from one place to another, and by the time you have moved it right round the compass, you simply come back to where you began. Sisyphus himself had no such hopeless task as yours.

To some extent Major Lyon may be right when he thinks that respectable persons would not object to proper supervision—although we know that many theatrical managers are by no means content to be supervised even in a lax and half-hearted way by the Lord Chamberlain,—but as to the kind of supervision opinions may well differ. It cannot be a good thing that licences for places of public amusement should be at the mercy of a perfectly irresponsible body of frequently crotchety gentlemen. It is idle to entertain Utopian ideas of a place of public amusement the licence of which should be in peril if the proprietor is not prepared to show that all his customers can produce certificates vouching for their respectability and virtue. Such an arrangement is only calculated to drive all the respectable men out of the trade, and to fill it with reckless gamblers and speculators with little or nothing to lose. If supervision and licensing be needed at all, the matter should be put into the hands of some responsible public officer, who would know, without straining the law that already exists as to the harbouring of “bad characters,” how to come down severely upon places that existed solely or chiefly for the purpose of such harbouring, and who would do his duty without the fear or favour from which irresponsible boards are not always free. In fact, what is wanted for such a place is a man of the world, with a knowledge of the necessary evils of great cities and of the impossibility of suppressing them, or of improving them off the face of the earth. Of course it will be said, as has often been said before, that this is a proposal to legalize vice and immorality, and probably our old friend, the thin edge of the wedge, will see active service again. That is a matter of small moment. I appeal from the people who do not really know the mischief, and cannot possibly have any acquaintance with the remedy, to those who can make a correct diagnosis of the disease, and are, therefore, likely to be able to suggest and apply the cure.

But there is one point as to which the deputation was undoubtedly in the right, and it is a point which music-hall proprietors would do well to take to heart, and seriously to consider. It is of more importance to them even than the question of supervising their audiences, because it is just one of those matters as to which, if the

present system is to continue—and to grow, as such things do—they will end by disgusting and repelling their audiences themselves, until nothing but the very dregs and dross will be left.

Major Lyon thinks that there are “other cases which would require legislation, such as the singing of improper songs, and dancing by persons improperly dressed, or rather, scarcely dressed at all.” As to the latter clause, the Major like many another ardent reformer, goes too far. It is not the case that in this particular department the music-halls give us anything worse than the theatres have given us for many years past, or that there is anything that calls aloud for suppression. But as to the grossness and shameless suggestiveness of some of the songs that are allowed to be sung at some of the halls—there are honourable exceptions—no protest can be too strong. It is not necessary to offend the readers of *The Theatre* with a detailed description of the coarseness of some of these effusions, or with specimens of the sort of miserable innuendo which, it is melancholy to add, is too readily and eagerly caught up and gloated over by some of the audiences, and too laxly tolerated and tacitly sanctioned by the rest. It is enough to ask any man who, without experience, doubts this statement, or thinks it exaggerated, to go—almost anywhere, any night, will do—and judge for himself. Let him listen to almost any of the comic singers—there are again honourable exceptions—and see how he likes it. And when he has made up his mind about the gentlemen, let him turn his attention to the ladies, who are responsible for quite their fair share of these deplorable ditties. There was a time when there was truth in every line of Thackeray’s description of the Cave of Harmony on the night when Colonel Newcome was moved to make a little speech, and when every man in the room felt as if the Colonel’s uplifted cane had fallen on his own particular shoulders. That bad old time died out before the recollection of the younger generation of to-day, but it would almost seem as if it were struggling to burst its tomb and vex the town once more. In the name of all that is decent let this scandal, at least, be stopped. The Lord Chamberlain and Mr. Pigott—best-abused of men—take care that the theatre shall be free from the possibility of such offence. Why should it be tolerated elsewhere? Let us, by all that is logical, have a Chamberlain of some sort to regulate the literature of the music-hall, and to restrain the antics in which that frisky muse much too often indulges. Let us take an ell—and a good one—from the liberty of the “suggestive” singer, before we fret ourselves about adding an inch to the skirts of the ballet, and whatever we may think about the first question touched upon in this paper, which in

comparison with this is merely, so to speak, a matter of convenience and expediency. It seems to me, in fact, to matter little if the audience at your music-hall be a little mixed—given that the entertainment is conducted with reasonable decorum and propriety—in comparison with the absolute necessity of keeping from their ears a “leperous distilment” by the side of which that of Claudius was milk and honey.

EARLY LIFE OF COLLEY CIBBER.

BY LADY LAMB.

WHAT a pleasant beginning to a life Colley Cibber’s must have been! I don’t mean so much from the place of his birth, for Southampton-street, Strand, does not sound romantic, even when we carry our thoughts back to its less smoke-begrimed existence in 1671, and I suppose it is possible to fix on a thousand more prepossessing spots as the cradle of a hero than this afore-named street, but I refer to the happiness of roaming about among the sculptured gods and goddesses, basso relievos, and the hundred and one marble inhabitants of his father’s, Caius Gabriel Cibber, studio. One can imagine the child looking upon all these effigies as real living friends, and investing one and all of them with a history, making fairy tales by the score and weaving endless webs of fancy to the music of his father’s chisel.

Most unwillingly I must leave the amusements of the early childhood of my friend of two hundred years ago to the imagination of my readers, as I can find no account of his doings until he appears in 1682 at the free school of Grantham, in Lincolnshire, “always in full spirits, in some small capacity to do right, but in a more frequent alacrity to do wrong.” Here he got rather the reputation with some of his schoolfellows of being a “pragmatical” prig, because on the death of Charles II., in 1684, he was the only one who would attempt to make a funeral oration which the master gave as an exercise to all the boys of his form. The lads considered this too difficult a task for them, and were greatly incensed when Cibber, by undertaking it, seemed to wish to be thought of superior ability. This irritation was considerably increased when the master, for his industry, placed him at the head of the form, so the malcontents made a set against him, and caused him to pay dearly for the distinction. They laughed at him, jeered at him, and played no end of mischievous schoolboy pranks; and not even the kindness of the master, who, probably suspecting these small tyrannies occasionally, took Cibber an airing with him on horseback whilst his

fellows were busy with their lessons, could quite make him enjoy his new position. Several little anecdotes are told of Colley Cibber's schoolboy life, but much as I should like to linger over them, the space at my disposal is so short that I am obliged to take leave of this portion of his career, mentioning only that he did not leave the free school until he had learnt all it could teach him, beginning at the lowest form, and gradually working his way up to the highest.

His parents took him away from Grantham about 1687 for the purpose of standing for an "Election of Children into Winchester College," and built great hopes of his future career should he be so fortunate as to be admitted. Of this admittance they appear to have made very sure, apparently from no better reason than the fact of his being descended from the founder William of Wykeham, "on his mother's side." The boy was accordingly started off with very little money and a "pompous pedigree" in his pocket. The election took place, and with no better recommendation than his own "naked merit" and the honour of his descent from the founder, Colley Cibber's name was not on the list of successful candidates. This failure did not affect his spirits in the least; on the contrary, he delighted in the prospect of a little more liberty, and leaving all regret and disappointment to his parents, he posted at once back to London, purposing to arrive in time to see a play at one of the theatres, before his mother should ask for an account of the money she had given him for travelling expenses.

Even at this early stage of his life the profession of an actor seemed to Cibber the summit of human bliss. However, knowing his parents did not participate in this view, he turned his thoughts to some more attainable object, and finally wrote to his father, who was superintending some architectural alterations Lord Devonshire was making at Chatsworth, to entreat that he might be sent to college. Caius Gabriel's answer was very satisfactory: as soon as affairs at Chatsworth would admit of his absence, he would meet his son, and together they would go to Cambridge, where he had an acquaintance with some of the authorities, who might be able to assist Colley. Some time passed, and Caius, finding it impossible to leave Chatsworth, sent to his son to join him there, unwilling to leave the young fellow any longer to the idle dissipation of London.

Before young Cibber could set out upon his journey into Derbyshire the Prince of Orange had landed in the West, and when at length he arrived at Nottingham he found his father in arms there, amongst the forces raised by Lord Devonshire in aid of William. Caius Gabriel was delighted to see his son, and as he

considered himself too old to bear the fatigue of a winter campaign, and had besides a great desire to know how his affairs at Chatsworth were progressing, he suggested to the Earl that Colley should take his place. His lordship agreeing, the son jumped into his father's saddle, and for the nonce exchanged his scholarly aspirations for a soldier's ambitions. The Earl had promised Caius Gabriel to protect and provide for Colley when the present disturbance in public affairs should be settled, so there was no need to feel anxious about the future.

A few days later, and while they were still at Nottingham, they heard that Prince George of Denmark and many other distinguished persons had deserted the King's cause and joined with William of Orange; also, that Princess Anne, fearing her father's resentment at this act of her husband's, had left London, and was now at only a few hours' distance from the town, and pursued by 2,000 of the King's dragoons, who were to bring her back prisoner to London. This afterwards turned out to be an incorrect rumour; the Princess *was* near Nottingham, and when the Earl of Devonshire's troops, hurrying to the rescue, came up with her, she was in a coach, attended only by her favourite Lady Churchill and Lady Fitzharding, and without any one of the two thousand threatened dragoons following her! Princess Anne was received with great joy in the town, and entertained that night by Lord Devonshire. The Earl's major-domo informed young Cibber that his lordship wished him to attend at the banquet, and to pay special attention to the requirements of Lady Churchill. These do not appear to have been numerous, as he only mentions her asking for "some wine and water," but either her voice or her bright eyes made an impression on him which fifty years after he recalled with pleasure.

On the advancement of the Prince and Princess of Orange to the throne the troops were ordered back to Nottingham. Some of the officers were given commissions, and those who wished to return to their usual avocations received their discharge. Cibber was somewhat piqued at not hearing that his name was in any of these new commissions, and determined to abandon all hope of military preferment, and return to his father at Chatsworth. There he remained until the Earl came home with the new honours of Lord Steward of his Majesty's household and Knight of the Garter, when, wishful to remind his lordship of his promises as to Colley's advancement, he ordered his son to draw up a petition recalling himself to the Earl's remembrance. On receipt of this solicitation the Earl replied that if young Cibber would go up to London in the winter he would consider of some provision for him. Up to London then he went, and danced attendance on the Earl for five long

months, but in his leisure hours gave himself up to his great delight, and haunting all the theatres in turn, made up his mind that, let patron and parents say what they might, he would be nothing else in life but an actor.

So the die was cast, and in his romantic love for the stage Cibber thought it no hardship that "for three-quarters of a year" he had to give his services for nothing. After that he received only a salary of ten shillings a week, but this when added to the "assistance of food and raiment" at his father's house, the young actor considered a mine of wealth. Very small parts were at first entrusted to him, and the first applause he received was in the part of the "Chaplain" in *The Orphan*. The transport of delight with which this triumph filled Cibber's heart can easily be imagined; and this joy was again intensified when "Scum" Goodman, enquiring of one of his comrades what "new young fellow that was" who acted the Chaplain, and on Cibber's being pointed out to him, turned round and clapping him on the shoulders said: "If he does not make a good actor I'll be hanged." Another success he achieved just about this time was on the occasion of the Queen's having commanded the *Double Dealer* to be acted, when, Kynaston being ill, the part of Lord Touchstone was offered to Cibber, who learned it the same night and played it the next evening. This representation elicited great applause, and to it he owed an increase in his salary of five shillings a week, making now the grand total of a pound! With this small remuneration he was forced to be content for some time, until a few of the older actors quitting the stage, left more rapid promotion open to their younger brethren.

In 1693 Cibber allowed the attractions of a young lady named Shore to blind him to all prudential considerations, and these two confiding young people started housekeeping on no better immediate resources than twenty pounds a year, which the old sculptor allowed him, and thirty shillings a week from the theatre. To augment his minute income Cibber began to write poems, and after a few successes, which still did not appear to lead to anything better, determined to write a "part" for himself. He accordingly produced the comedy of *Love's Last Shift*, or *The Fool in Fashion*, which was acted in January, 1695. He represented Sir Novelty, and received many compliments both upon his play and acting. Lord Dorset said "it was the best first play that any author in his memory had produced, and that for a young fellow to show himself such an actor and such a writer in one day was something extraordinary." The year following Sir John Vanbrugh wrote his *Relapse*, as a sequel to *The Fool in Fashion*, and chose Cibber for the leading

part. In 1700, Cibber spoke the prologue and epilogue to *The Pilgrim*, and also took two short incidental parts in the play. The fact that Dryden fixed upon him to speak the prologue considerably ruffled the temper of his confrère Wilks. In 1704, being much struck with the signs of dramatic power in Mrs. Oldfield, Cibber wrote his *Careless Husband* for her, and with the production of that play he may be said to have passed the threshold of the high reputation he enjoyed.

RIENZI.

BY HENRY HERSEE.

FORTY years have elapsed since Herr Richard Wagner wrote and composed his first lyric work of any importance, and it was after an interval of thirty-seven years since the first public performance of the opera at Dresden that an English adaptation of *Rienzi, der Letzte der Tribunen*, was recently presented at Her Majesty's Theatre, by the Carl Rosa Opera Company. We are at length enabled to compare Herr Wagner's "first manner" with his "second manner," as exhibited in *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*. It is not likely that such illustrations of his "third manner" as *The Ring of the Nibelung* will ever be seen on the English stage. Since this and other specimens of Herr Wagner's latest works were produced at the Bayreuth Festival his popularity in Germany has perceptibly waned; and since the melancholy Wagner Festival at the Albert Hall the "Music of the Future" has found few partisans in England, outside of the small but zealous body of adherents who, by the foundation of the short-lived "Wagner Society," and by other equally futile means, have sought to gain English proselytes for the Prophet of the Zukunft. It has often been said that the merits or demerits of Herr Wagner's latest theories are not in any way affected by the quality of his *Rienzi*, constructed on theories and in conformity with principles of art which he has long since repudiated as unclean things. The remark may be just, but there are good grounds for the belief that *Tristan und Isolde* and *The Ring of the Nibelung* would never have been written—in their existing shapes—had not *Rienzi* been previously produced. Paradoxical as this statement may at first sight appear, it will be found worthy of consideration, and in discussing it we may help to throw light on the embers of the fast-expiring Wagner controversy.

Rienzi was not Herr Wagner's earliest work, but was preceded by *The Fairies* (1833) and *The Novice of Palermo* (1836), two admitted failures, for which the youthfulness of the composer may

be deemed a palliation. When he wrote *Rienzi* (1839) he was twenty-six years of age. Practice and study had made him a master of his craft; the grammar of music had no longer any difficulties for him; he was familiar with those orchestral resources which he has since so wonderfully developed; and it was in the bright morning of manhood, when imagination suggests its most vivid pictures, and fancy its most exquisite imagery, that he set himself to the task of musically illustrating an inspiring theme. That he was stimulated by an honourable ambition his own writings afford proof. He tells us that *Rienzi* was conceived and executed under the influence of his "earliest impressions, received from Spontini's heroic operas, and from the glittering *genre* of the Parisian Grand Opera, as represented by Auber, Meyerbeer, and Halévy." He might have added the name of Rossini, whose *Guillaume Tell* he had not listened to in vain. "I completed *Rienzi*," he says, "during my first sojourn in Paris; I had the splendid Grand Opera before me, and my ambition was not only to imitate, but, with reckless extravagance, to surpass all that had gone before, in brilliant finales, hymns, processions, and musical clang of arms. While writing the libretto, I simply thought of an opera-text which would enable me to display the principal forms of grand opera,—such as introductions, finales, choruses, arias, duets, trios, &c., with all possible splendour." Taking Bulwer's novel as his guide, he constructed an excellent *scenario*, and although his libretto was not equal in poetical merit to those written by him for subsequent operas, it afforded abundant opportunities for the attainment of the objects he had in view. It was therefore under favourable conditions, provided by himself, that he entered into competition with Auber, Meyerbeer, and other writers of grand opera. If he failed in the contest, his failure must be attributable to inherent weakness; to some deficiency in his musical organization. A glance at the score of *Rienzi* may enlighten us on these points.

The overture to *Rienzi* is perhaps the most effective portion of the work. *Rienzi's* Prayer, and other vocal passages, afterwards met with, are skilfully introduced; the instrumentation is varied and masterly; and although the overture cannot be placed in the same rank with such masterpieces as the overtures to *Guillaume Tell*, *Masaniello*, and *Der Freischütz*, it is a work of great merit, and forms a fitting prelude to the spectacular opera. It may be said at once that the instrumentation throughout the work shows the hand of a master. This is an important element in opera, but is neither the only one nor the highest. Herr Wagner now contends that in opera the orchestra should be paramount, and the singers employed in unfolding the dramatic story by means of

“endless melody”; that is to say, a succession of musical phrases, unbroken by solos, duets, or trios, regular in form. However logical these opinions may be, they find very few sincere supporters, and the general judgment of mankind—which, as Addison says, “in matters of taste is seldom in the wrong”—is unmistakably in favour of that kind of opera in which the ear is charmed by symmetrical vocal melodies, enriched by appropriate orchestration. Melodies of this kind are abundant in *Rienzi*, but unfortunately, though symmetrical, they are commonplace in character. Devoid of originality, they are equally uninteresting when employed in the simple expression of pathetic emotion, and when written in the florid style. *Rienzi*’s Prayer—the best solo in the opera—is dignified and impressive, but the leading theme is made up of familiar phrases; the “smell of the lamp” is continuously perceptible; and we look in vain for evidences of spontaneous power and fertility of melodic invention, such as enabled Rossini to write, in less than a quarter of an hour, the magnificent Prayer and Chorus in his *Mosé in Egitto*. In the long and tedious duet between *Rienzi* and Irene, in Act 5 (wisely omitted in the English version) the soprano has to sing a number of florid Rossinian passages, quite inappropriate to the dramatic situation—feeble imitations of the model selected. The Battle Hymn in Act 3 is bold and vigorous; martial in character, and well suited to the striking situations in which it is introduced. It must always be effective when sung on the stage by choristers so able as those of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, amid the splendours of a superb *mise en scène*, and the glamour of dramatic excitement. The first eight bars merit unstinted praise; the succeeding twelve bars are pretentious, but weak; and the poor device of giving trumpet phrases to the voices is repeated *ad nauseam*. The song of the “Messenger of Peace” is melodious, but commonplace; and here—as often elsewhere in the work—Herr Wagner shows his early tendency to that frequent change of tonality which is the besetting sin of his later compositions. Having failed to find an original melody in the initial key, or in its dominant, he wanders into remote keys in search of one; but the coy phantom eludes his quest, and he returns by painful steps to the tonic, without the much-desiderated novel “tune.” It would be waste of time to expose in detail the poverty of vocal melody exhibited in *Rienzi*,—a work written in avowed imitation of such melodious operas as *Masaniello* and *Les Huguenots*—but it may be shown that the ballet music of *Rienzi*, in which Herr Wagner had unlimited scope for the display of inventive power, is unadorned by any trace of melodic originality. It should also be added that in his concerted pieces and finales he signally failed to approach the excellence of those great works

which he had selected as models, and had resolved to surpass. An eminent French critic has remarked that "it is easier to write skilful harmonies and to invent orchestral effects, than it is to enrich the lyric stage with impressive situations, well-constructed concerted pieces, and original melodies; and it was for good reasons that Herr Wagner became more and more adverse to pure melody and accepted forms, and sought to replace them by vague and formless chants, by chords bristling with dissonances, and by a succession of phrases,—confused, clashing with each other,—without punctuation,—and without logic. He was right in counting on the admiration of those who excel in the combination of notes but have never been successful in producing original melodies."

The genius of Herr Wagner is unquestionable. Had he been gifted with a fertile vein of fresh melody, his *Rienzi* would probably have taken an honourable place among operatic masterpieces, and he might have become the successful rival of his greatest contemporaries. In that case, we should have been spared his bitter denunciations of composers whose works he had unsuccessfully tried to imitate, and he would probably have been a ruthless assailant of any innovator who propounded theories akin to those illustrated at Bayreuth. He no doubt soon became conscious wherein lay his inability to compete with the musical giants of the time; and it could not escape his notice that such success as *Rienzi* achieved was chiefly attributable to the dramatic interest of the plot and the opportunities afforded for spectacular display. If the power of creating original vocal melody, within the limits of recognised forms, had been denied him, he was a master of orchestral resources,—and these he could turn to account, in combination with poetical and romantic dramas, and striking scenic effects. In this direction he turned, and instead of confessing himself defeated by the rivals with whom he had competed, he with characteristic audacity proclaimed himself their superior;—the Evangelist of a new musical gospel, in which the primary importance of vocal melody was ignored. In all probability the new doctrine would never have been preached or illustrated but for the comparative failure of his early work, *Rienzi*.

THE CENSORSHIP OF PLAYS.

BY SYDNEY GRUNDY.

THE public at large, and even the theatrical profession itself, are wonderfully ignorant of the precise nature of the jurisdiction which the Lord Chamberlain exercises over the drama; and I

am strongly of opinion that the large majority of its supporters are its supporters simply and solely because they have not the least idea what they are supporting. There is not scope, in one of these desultory conversations at the Round Table, to enter into an exhaustive consideration of the subject; and I do not think that it is in my power, in the small space which is at my disposal, to aim a harder blow at the system of the censorship than by simply stating the method of its practical operation.

At least seven days before the production of a new play it is the statutory duty of the manager of the theatre at which it is to be produced to send to the office of the Lord Chamberlain a copy of the piece, accompanied by a fee of either one or two guineas, according to the number of acts, for its perusal. Within these seven days it is the practice, *but not the duty*, of the Lord Chamberlain to communicate with the manager, allowing or disallowing the play. If he allows it, no hardship is inflicted upon anybody, beyond the payment of the fee, the expense of the copy, and a great deal of anxiety. If the Lord Chamberlain omitted to communicate with the manager at all, it is difficult to say what would be the manager's position; for whilst one section of the Act of Parliament only restricts him from performing the unlicensed play until the expiration of the period of seven days, another section subjects him to a penalty if he performs it before it is licensed. But if the play is disallowed, the hardship is apparent. It is the practice of the Lord Chamberlain's office to make known the disallowance by means of a letter, written by an official called the "Examiner of all Theatrical Entertainments," addressed to the manager, informing him that the Examiner regrets his inability to recommend the play for license. No reason whatever is alleged for the disallowance. If the author communicates with the Lord Chamberlain's office, the office politely declines to discuss the matter, or to give him any information. If the manager is accorded an interview, the proceedings are strictly private, and he is thereby precluded from informing the author of what has taken place. There is the end of the play. Be it the labour of ten days or of ten years, it is doomed. There is no appeal; and the author is left in ignorance of his offence.

Is there a single man, in the possession of his senses, who will seriously contend that this is a right state of things? It is no exaggeration to say, that if this measure of personal government were applied to any political matter which affected the mass of the people, the result would be a revolution. If to-night it were put in the power of the Lord Chamberlain to deprive the ordinary artisan of the wages of his work for any period, without assigning any

reason whatsoever, to-morrow morning there would be no such person as a Lord Chamberlain.

This arrogance of silence was, possibly, never intended by the Legislature; but it is the natural development of the principle of irresponsible government. It is the most special of pleading to argue that this is an abuse in the administration of the censorship, and not a fault inherent in the system itself. Since the world began, absolute power has always been improperly exercised. Every symptom of arbitrary government naturally engenders abuses, as a corpse engenders corruption.

Trial by jury, with its accompanying opportunities of appeal, is not, as every-day experience shows, by any means a perfectly working machinery; but it is the best which civilisation has been able to invent for the adjustment of disputes and differences. It is difficult to understand why this machinery, which is regarded as sufficient for the most momentous issues of social life, and which is applied to questions of public decency and morality in all other departments of literature, should not be extended to the literature of the stage. Surely a play has as much right to be regarded as innocent as a book or a newspaper, until it has been found to be hurtful and subversive of the public morals, by the ordinary judicial tribunals. There is, indeed, a special reason why a particular clemency should be shown to an unacted play. The tendency of a book or an article can very clearly be perceived in its manuscript form, but it is not at all easy even for experts to judge of the precise effect of a play until it is presented upon the stage.

It must be candidly admitted that the abolition of the present supervision of the drama in its unacted shape would practically result in the temporary representation of a certain number of works of a mischievous character; but if it be better that ten criminals should escape than that one innocent man should be convicted, it is better that ten mischievous plays should be acted than that one innocent play should be suppressed. The mischief would not be half as great as that which necessarily results from the liberty of the press. An ordinary play is not seen by nearly so miscellaneous a body of people as an ordinary newspaper. It must be admitted that no institution has taken advantage of its liberty to indulge in a more reckless license of libel and impropriety than a certain section of the press; yet does any sane man think for a moment that the community would benefit by subjecting the press to the supervision of the Lord Chamberlain?

There are certain firms in all large towns which make a business of the manufacture and sale of obscene photographs. Their stock-in-trade is liable to be seized, at any moment, under a magistrate's

warrant; but even these men have to be tried before they are found guilty, and their stock-in-trade has to be publicly condemned before it can be suppressed or destroyed. Even wretches such as these have a right of appeal to a jury, which is denied to the English playwright. Certainly it is no greater offence for an author to exhibit an immoral play to the public than for a butcher to expose diseased meat for sale upon his stall. The butcher can defend himself before the magistrate, and appeal from the magistrate's decision: it does not seem to me to be reasonable that a privilege should be denied to the British playwright which is accorded to the British butcher.

The present relations between the Lord Chamberlain and the stage are founded upon the false assumption that the drama is a frivolous amusement which must be kept decent, and not upon the truth that it is a great art which must enjoy absolute freedom; and as long as a great art is regarded as merely a frivolous amusement, merely a frivolous amusement it will remain. I have incurred much ridicule, and much of that sort of laughter which reminds one of the crackling of thorns under a pot, for contending that the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain has prevented many a good play from being even written. Laughter, however, is not argument, and truth survives it. Now that the chorus of derision has in some measure subsided, I repeat my assertion, that the best intellects of the day will not condescend to submit their work to the arbitrament of a Polonius, and that even those whom circumstances compel to do so are cramped in the exercise of their capacities, and cannot afford to devote months of labour to a production which may be annihilated in an hour.

The company of the Théâtre Français are about to visit England, and it has been rumoured that Earl Granville is to present a petition to Parliament that the whole of their unequalled repertory may be exempted from the operation of the censorship. Could there be a more eloquent satire upon the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain than the circumstance that the greatest company of actors in the world cannot represent in England the greatest dramatic works of modern times without a total suspension of the regulations which affect our drama? Is it a matter of wonderment that we have no such thing as a modern dramatic literature?

I deeply regret to note that two of our own handful of dramatic authors—Mr. Byron and Mr. Burnand—have expressed themselves in favour of the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain; the latter in the pages of *Punch*, and between brackets. It would ill become a novice in the craft of which these gentlemen are recognised past-masters, to speak disrespectfully of their opinions, but I may be

permitted to say, that with the greatest possible admiration for the cleverness of Mr. Byron, and with the utmost personal good feeling towards an author who is ever ready to extend a helping hand to his humbler brethren, I fail to detect in any of his work the slightest endeavour to depict human nature and the actual passions of mortality. It is only when an author endeavours to do this that the full weight of the terrible burden which the censorship imposes upon him can be realized. I can well believe that Mr. Byron has never found its ordeal a restraint; whilst, as for Mr. Burnand, I can only respectfully disregard the opinion of a gentleman who is capable of expressing his views upon such a subject in a parenthesis.

It is greatly to be deplored that men of the position of Professor Morley, who hold other views upon this matter, do not devote a portion of their time and opportunities to its discussion in high quarters; and that the protest against an institution which makes an English dramatic literature an impossibility, should be left in the hands of obscure writers, who have the ear of neither the press nor the public.

HARLEQUIN IN EXTREMIS.

BY D. J. ANDERSON.

THE masked and spangled harlequin will soon cease to slap the flats with his pliant wand, for he is dying. He is dying—not decently in his bed, dressed in the night-shirt of private life, but year by year upon the stage. As each succeeding Christmas comes round harlequin finds new aspirants for public favour push him to the wall. Pantomime itself is decaying. Its trouble commenced with atrophy of the harlequinade. Its days are numbered. Some boxing-night of the future will discover it buried underneath a heap of conventional rubbish. Poor thing! It is not very old, and in its prime was nothing better than foreign fooling—witty fooling if you will—grimacing to please the beef-fed islanders.

We are not a nation of pantomimists, and but for Grimaldi British pantomime would long ago have given up the ghost. Lord Macaulay learned his legislative speeches by rote, and fired them off, first in the House of Commons, and afterwards in the House of Lords, with his hands in his pockets, and looking straight before him. And Lord Macaulay was a typical Englishman. I have said that harlequin is *in extremis*. He has less and less to do. For a long time past he has not ventured on any new business. A shadow

of his former self, he must perish as all stagnant things do perish. And, alas! for the sorry clown, the smirking columbine, and the senile pantaloon, they must likewise retire to the limbo of the great unwanted. At a time when lords thought it a fine thing to hob-nob with pugilists, and marquises grew famous by practical joking, and gentlemen beat the watch, clown was a power in the State. Those high personages were themselves but grown-up children, and hence they delighted, as some children still delight, in the harlequinade.

For my part, I make bold to say that I see no fun in clown's make-up, and I find a sorry joke none the more brilliant because the poor jester's face is smeared with bismuth. When clown sits upon the baby the anguish of the infant's supposititious mother wrings my heart. When the leg of mutton is purloined from the butcher's tray, I see in my mind's eye a respectable family left dinnerless. I do not, and never did, recognise the connection between sausages and satire, nor does it interest me to know that clown has lost a fourpenny bit, and found a farthing. All my sympathies are for the harmless old gentleman who tumbles upon clown's buttered slide, for who shall say that the venerable one might not be the Lord Chamberlain himself? Admitting the police are not without the faults common to authority, it ought not to be a grateful sight to see the guardians of order pelted with stale vegetables. Pray observe that all clown's jokes are based on cruelty. He is a demon in baggy breeches, and laughs at the discomfiture of unoffending mankind. The pictures which I have seen of clown in private life represent him as sitting in a poor garret, beside a fireless grate, nursing a dead infant. But clown cannot have a baby die every day, and therefore I suspect these pictures of clown at home are purposely exaggerated.

As for Columbine, I consider her costume unbecoming in the extreme, and her conduct far from praiseworthy. Her stuck-out skirts offend the æsthetic eye. The contour outrages the canons of art, and is a remnant of the age of the late Mr. Lumley's ballet revival, the period when our notions of good taste were at their lowest. I have often pondered over the likenesses of Taglioni and Cerito, and looking upon their long black-banded, simpering faces and muslin monstrosities, have wondered how our fathers could have loved them. Then I have thought of our fathers' wall-papers, of their horsehair-covered mahogany arm-chairs, and of the stone pine-apples with which they ornamented the pillars of their garden gates, and pity has taken the place of wonder. Columbine dances—if you please to call it dancing—to pattern. Rushing upon the stage, she minces down to the footlights, sniggers at the chandelier in the roof, corkscrews along the front,

twirls up the wing and across the flats, and down to the float again. Then sidling to the centre, opposite the conductor's nose, she stands erect upon her toes, kisses both hands at an imaginary lover, turns her back to the audience, and runs off breathing heavily. She is the common stage sweetheart of both clown and harlequin, and even the senile pantaloon ogles her with his wicked, blear eyes. Columbine is supposed to spend her earnings for the support of her little, crippled brother; and it is matter of common notoriety that all columbines, without exception, have crippled brothers whom they support.

Age, I do abhor thee,
Youth, I do adore thee;
O, my love, my love is young!

sings Shakspeare in the *Passionate Pilgrim*. But the bard could pity the sorrows of age. Witness Lear, and that sweet servant, the old poor man, Adam, in *As You Like It*. Now the pantaloon of pantomime is a standing insult and reproach to increasing years. You must have noticed that pantaloon has not been guilty of any offence warranting clown in flinging the old fellow flat upon his front, and contumeliously picking him up by—I mean as he does. Pantaloon hobbles with bent back, leaning upon a crutch, furrowed of forehead, and wagging—what should be—his venerable beard from side to side. No doubt he is to blame for helping clown in his pranks. But poor pantaloon never realizes his share of the sausages, never even snatches a kiss from those wonderfully-shawled females, in frowsy bonnets and pink silk stockings, whom the human eye has not dwelt on outside the regions of pantomime. Friends! Many of us are getting old, and have boys and girls growing up around us. Is it right, is it wise, that we should encourage them, by the sight of an old man made to perform the menial office of a wheel-barrow, with his shrunk shanks for the handles thereof? You may tell me that children laugh at the harlequinade. They do; they also laugh at our wrinkles and false teeth. They take pleasure in killing flies and pelting frogs with stones. Big boys bully little ones; grown girls despise their juniors. And all those faults of temper and breeding are encouraged by the harlequinade, which rose in an age when parsons got drunk, nobles gambled away their estates, and most of our national sports were dashed with cruelty.

When I speak of Harlequin being *in extremis*, I do not mean to warn theatrical managers that the entertainments called pantomimes will not in future bring grist to the mill. Of that they must necessarily be better judges than I. They will look around and observe the fate of the present year's pantomimes and draw their

own conclusions. My business is with art and humanity, not with the till. You may remember in Ancient Egypt, when art was comparatively in its infancy, sculptors cut similar forms from generation to generation. Conservatism in artistic production was part of the national religion, and, as a matter of fact, the artist caste was despised and held in low esteem. I should not care if ten thousand managers told me that no pantomime could succeed which was not based on one or two, or even three, familiar legends. Why, what are the majority of pantomimes when first made but rubbish? Their fun, such as it is, generally depends on topical songs, by other writers, imported into them, and on catch-sayings—gags—introduced by the actors themselves. While other forms of art have progressed, the art of writing pantomime introductions has stood still.

The late lamented Bishop of St. David's, a most accomplished scholar, used to contend that the origin of all popular legends was lost in the mists of obscurity. For instance, the story of the old woman who, when sweeping out her room, found a silver sixpence in a vinegar-bottle, is a tale which the Arabs of the desert may have told over their camp fires before the star of Bethlehem came out in the sky. But among the Eastern peoples the story has a terrible ending. It does not finish with the butcher who slew the ox, or with the Angel of Death which killed the butcher; but with the Great Spirit that smote the King of Terrors, and drove Death himself out of the world. As Ben Jonson afterwards said of Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother, "Death, ere thou shalt find another, wise, and fair, and good as she, Time shall fling a dart at thee." Such a story is better fitted for an epic than for a pantomime.

Let us consider the hybrid titles of modern pantomimes. *Harlequin, Old Mother Hubbard, and Jack and the Bean Stalk; or, the Fairy Prince in the Oil Jars of the Forty Thieves!* That is sheer nonsense, gentlemen pantomime writers; and you must leave it off, or pantomime writing will leave you off. Do you fancy that in an age of Swinburne and Sage Green we will tolerate such literary resurrection pie? In England old customs die hard. But mark me, the fate of rubbish is the dust-bin. Look at *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*, or if you will not crane your necks to look up at Shakspere, look around at Hans Christian Andersen and Lewis Carroll. I know that with the coming of the dispensation of sorrow Pan died, and the Fairies and Satyrs fled to the inmost recesses of the deep woods, and exhaled in flowers, unseen of men. Even Comus and his rabble rout are no more. But Farcy is asleep, not dead. No longer ago than

last summer, sitting sadly in a boat upon the river, between the lights, while the swallows made a host of dark specks close to the water, against the low primrose streak, the adieu of day, all the garishness, the folly and vulgarity of pantomime came before me, and I said,— “We must conquer new realms of stage poetry; for, though some of us think him so lusty, the masked and spangled harlequin is *in extremis*.”

ACTORS' SALARIES.

BY JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

MANAGERS from time to time have raised an outcry about the alarming increase of actors' salaries, and have attributed their bankruptcy, not to the fact that they have failed to hit the public taste in the selection of dramas or dramatic exponents, but to the extreme rapacity of “the profession.” They have shown a singular ignorance of the laws of supply and demand. They have seen theatres springing up in every direction in town and country without a corresponding increase in the number of actors and actresses, and yet they have professed to be astonished that salaries have more than doubled in less than a quarter of a century. They have refused to acknowledge the fact that a performer is worth a certain portion of his “drawing” power, although they must know that an acrobat like Leotard received £30 a night for his ten minutes' performance at the Alhambra, and that Blondin received £100 for every one of his high-rope ascensions at the Crystal Palace. After making every allowance for the diminished purchasing power of money in the present day compared with fifty years ago, there is still much in the salaries paid to the leading actors and actresses in the “palmy days of the drama” that will strike theatrical people as curious. Take Drury Lane, for example, at the early part of the present century (1802–3). The best paid male actor of the stock company was Jack Bannister, who got £25 a week, while Charles Kemble had to be content with £11 a week. Dowton got £12 a week; Pope, £10; Suett, £10; Wroughton, £10; Palmer, £10; and these salaries tapered down to much smaller sums, like £6 and £5, which stood against the names of Barrymore, Wewitzer, &c. Miss Pope got £12 a week; Miss Mellon, £10; Miss De Camp, £7; while some of the ladies were paid nightly. At Covent Garden John Philip Kemble received £30 a week; Charles Kemble received £12 a week (£1 more than he got at Drury Lane); G. F. Cooke got £25; Munden, £14; Emery, £9; Lewis, £12; Johnstone, £10;

Knight, £7; Blanchard, the same; Fawcett, £10; Farley, £6; and others in proportion. Mrs. Siddons received £25 a week; Mrs. Maddocks, £8; Mrs. Glover, £9; and Mrs. Litchfield, £15. It is betraying no professional secrets to say that neither Miss Ellen Terry nor Mrs. Kendal would look at a salary such as Mrs. Siddons was glad to take, while in the country now on the sharing system they can often make ten times what they make in London.

The sudden and unfortunate collapse of one of the great London theatres—a house sometimes called the National Theatre—has raised the question (a question which could only exist in the theatrical profession) as to the propriety or impropriety of taking or refusing half-salaries. Theatrical people are so hedged round with conventional and peculiar customs, that it is almost impossible to approach them as you would approach other labourers. The benefit system is one of these customs, and until this is abolished it is difficult to believe that there is not something in the constitution of a playhouse company which removes them from the operation of ordinary commercial laws. Few people, however, outside the charmed circle fail to see the absurdity of throwing any blame on any body of actors and theatrical workpeople, or any members of that body, who refuse to submit to a sudden reduction of fifty per cent. on their salaries to sustain a falling theatre in which they never had any interest in profits. If it were the custom of managers in thriving times to call their company together and distribute bonuses or double salaries on the score of the general prosperity, there might then be some justification, in a time of trouble, for demanding services at half the proper remuneration. This not being the case (there is no record of such a case), it is foolish and illogical to abuse, even by implication, any members of a company who refuse to act the moment they are told that the manager is not in a position to pay their salaries. The sentiment which is too often imported into theatrical transactions generally leads to some injustice, and the sooner actors, authors, and managers accept their position as traders, and nothing more, the better it will be for the so-called “dramatic profession.”



THE THEATRE NO8 NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE

Yours Very Truly
Charles Warner

Portraits.

XVI.—MR. WARNER.

IN the year 1862 a boy fresh from Westbury College ran away from home and joined a company of provincial players. He had just previously been placed in an architect's office, but was too ambitious of distinction on the stage to defer to his parent's wishes. For some time he had to submit to the drudgery and vicissitudes which usually fall to the lot of the provincial actor. Having gained sufficient confidence to be able to go through a part without trepidation, he was called upon to represent all sorts and conditions of men, from kings in tragedy down to the unfortunate gentleman in the harlequinade. On one occasion, in the burlesque of the *Colleen Bawn*, he even sang a comic song and executed a grotesque dance, a fact which might have been forgotten if his appearance in the piece had not been attended with a curious accident. In what he considered the most effective part of the dance a trap-door on which he chanced to step gave way, and a moment afterwards he was not to be seen! The audience was hugely diverted by the mishap; Miss Bella Pateman, who was playing Eily with much grace and spirit, went into hysterics, and the performance had to be suspended until she came to. The young actor, it should be added, was not seriously injured by the fall. Even such rough work as this, however, is not without its advantages, as to be seen in the trained intelligence displayed by the young actor when, in 1864, he appeared at the Princess's Theatre. No very rare sagacity was needed to predict that Mr. Charles Warner—for it was he—would win an enviable position on the stage. From 1866 to 1869 he was at Drury Lane, playing chivalrous lovers and characters of that stamp in Mr. Chatterton's revivals. Thence he passed to the Olympic, where, as Charley Burrige in Mr. Byron's *Daisy Farm*, he for the first time achieved a distinct success. In 1872 we find him playing such different parts as Orpheus in *Medea* and Mr. Alfred Jingle at the Lyceum. His versatility and power were now beyond dispute, but it was not until he went to the Vaudeville that these qualities became fully apparent. In the standard comedies revived there in 1873 and 1874 he seemed to find a thoroughly congenial element. The part in which he produced the greatest effect was Harry Dornton, a part by no means easy to play, seeing that it requires an extensive variety of expression. Levity, remorse, repentance, hope,

despair, anger, recklessness, intoxicated frenzy, and both real and simulated love make up the character of Harry Dornton. Mr. Warner fairly passed the ordeal to which he was submitted. "When," said the *Daily Telegraph*, "he has subdued a tendency to exaggeration, which may fairly be attributed to over-anxiety respecting his responsibilities, no fault will be found with his personation of the careless Harry Dornton. The warm-hearted youth, lured by evil companionship, and impressed with the belief that, in command of boundless resources, he can safely squander his thousands on the result of a race or the turn of a die, never loses entirely the sympathy of the audience. The redeeming point of the character seems fully borne in mind by the young actor, who may be congratulated upon having greatly advanced his reputation by the proofs here given of an ability scarcely before suspected." Then the *Standard* said: "His face and figure admirably adapt themselves to the part, as does the youthful freshness of his general manner. The part is vividly and for the most part correctly conceived. The scenes of wild impulsive emotion engage all the actor's most earnest nature, and are realized with even superfluous intensity." By some critics his lighter scenes were preferred, and certainly the graceful and easy manner with which he went through them would not be easy to equal. Mr. Warner was the original Charles Middlewick in *Our Boys*, but at the end of 1876 he left the Vaudeville to appear as Vladimir in the *Danischeff* at the St. James's theatre. How he played the great scene with the Countess no one who saw the performance requires to be reminded. Soon afterwards, in a morning performance at the Aquarium Theatre he achieved another remarkable success as Young Mirabel in Mr. Marshall's edition of Farquhar's *Inconstant*. But for a slight want of refinement and a too-constantly maintained intoxication of high spirits the performance would have been faultless. The brilliant misogynist and man of the town seemed to stand before us as a living reality. Mr. Warner's acting when Mirabel is confronted by the ruffians in the den into which he has been decoyed by Mistress Lamorre—the rapid transition from rage to affected gaiety, as he perceives that to resent the insult put upon him would be his death—was particularly fine. The allegation that modern actors cannot play old comedy was far from supported by this performance, for the actor seemed to have exactly caught the spirit of the period to which the *Inconstant* belongs. The characters recently essayed by him have been Henry Shore and Tom Robinson in *It is Never too Late to Mend*. In point of élan Mr. Warner is almost without a rival on the English stage.

Fexilleton.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF ST. PIERRE.

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

SUPPOSING our desires could be gratified without an interval between the wish and its realization, there would presently be an end to the world's capacity for providing us with enjoyment. Those ill-starred individuals of romance who have been endowed with the prompt realization of their wishes have invariably found the fairy gift an undesirable inheritance. Half the pleasure of possession goes in the anticipation and hope that preceded it. We should soon long for the end of all things if our wishes were consummated as soon as they are conceived. To hope is to live, to look forward is to be happy. Ask the young with what enjoyment they contemplate the day when they will go forth to see the world. Ask the old why they look back to find their pleasures in memory. The other day I had not seen Caen, the chief town of the department of Calvados, the burial-place of William the Conqueror, and the scene of Beau Brummell's last hours. William and Beau Brummell! What a text for a rebuke to human vanity! The tomb of one and the death of the other are both facts in the history of Caen. It had been the dream of many years, my sojourn in Caen. I had stood by Niagara, I had sat in the Indian's wigwam in the far-off valleys beyond Quebec, but Caen was still a tender hope unrealized, a sunny spot in my untravelled future. Its grey stone houses, its graceful spires and towers, its lancet windows, its reminiscences of the Conqueror, its atmosphere of classic repose, its foreign ways, its dreamy suburbs, had I not longed to compare them with our English cities, with Durham and York, and Lincoln and Worcester, and all the quiet rook-haunted places which still make England a paradise for the poet, the painter, and the recluse? My friend Blackburn's book on "Normandy Picturesque" had fired my imagination too. That church of St. Pierre and the street of St. Jean, the Calvados caps, and the old-fashioned habits of the people (if they will forgive what

some may regard as an aspersion on the progressive instincts of Caen) again set my mind wandering in the shadows of St. Pierre the Beautiful.

It has been said that "the fascination of adventure and hazard forms one of the most powerful spells in human feeling." This is borne out by the perilous adventures of mountain-climbers in Switzerland and English sportsmen in Western America. The chamois-hunters of the Alps are said to be unable to forego their daring sport even with the full prospect of death before them. A visit to Caen, if you go by way of Southampton and Havre, is not altogether devoid of the excitement of peril and the sensation of adventure. You may experience the wildest anxieties, and suffer the torments of Hades any stormy night, between the Solent and the shores of St. Adresse. Battles with porters on the quay may succeed the night's fight with the ocean, and the delays and uncertainties of Normandy railways may supply the place of the more formidable troubles of the Alps and the Prairies, before you land at the chief station of the capital of Calvados, which boasts not only its own railway proper, but also a *chemin de fer, de Caen à la mer*, a rhyming description that Mark Twain, who "*punched in presence of the passengaire*," would have fully appreciated. But when you go to Caen, may you reach it as I did, a wanderer, unexpected, unannounced, with all your family impedimenta at your back. This is not a malicious wish, I assure you. May you, I repeat, arrive late at night, like the traveller in the ancient play, with all your family at your back, and be told that the *fêtes* are on; that it will not be possible to find one bed, let alone four. "My dear sir, it is the *fêtes* and races, the town is crowded; it is very sad that you should not have made your arrangements beforehand." So it is, but we are the only passengers nevertheless. We have an omnibus all to ourselves. Jean will take us to the leading hotel first? With pleasure, of course we will. Failing accommodation there, he will drive us to all the other hotels. Certainly he will. Those bright franc-pieces, what passports they are! May you come upon Caen, I say, just as we did. A calm night of autumn. The moon sailing aloft in a blue wold. Streets crowded with people; streets lighted with ten thousand lamps; streets bright with business; streets in which only the omnibus occupied the roadway. Chinese lanterns, like M. Tadema's Regent's Park Garden on a reception night, multiplied by thousands. Coloured glass lamps that would have reminded Beau Brummell of romps at Bath and gay doings at Vauxhall. Gas jets that link to-day with the times of Louis XIV; and mottoes that join "Progress" with the *courses de Caen*. Above

this the picturesque roofs; above them the tower and steeple of St. Pierre. They had lighted a pan of green fire at the porch of the church. I am not an architect. If I were, I think I should not have objected to this strange weird light, playing for a moment upon that Gothic façade and suddenly leaving it in a transient darkness, from which the calm moonbeams presently relieved it. Blunder on Monsieur Jean, call to thine horse and crack thy whip, it matters little to us how far we journey through scenes like these. Halt! We pull up under a wreath of flags that show their "red, white, and blue" in a blaze of lanterns. There is a band of music. It heads a torchlight procession. The Marseillaise, with cymbals and drums, crashes and wails, pent up between the tall grey houses. Tramp, tramp, tramp come the soldiers. They are Norman and Bretagne troops. A vast crowd follows them, taking up the stirring music of the band with voices loud and strong, and marching in the lurid light of torch and lantern. The Marseillaise! what ghosts the thrilling hymn invokes! One above all others. It is a fair and lovely woman. "She is of stately Norman figure, in her twenty-fifth year; of beautiful, still countenance; her name is Charlotte Corday, heretofore styled D'Armans, while nobility still was." She rises out of her secluded stillness. She moves out of "the dim ferment of Caen." Presently she is in the drowsy diligence, lumbering along towards Paris. In due course, going straight to its purpose, this sublime figure is face to face with destiny. "Citoyen Marat, I am from Caen, the seat of rebellion, and wished to speak with you." Anon, there is a cry, "*A moi, chère amie*. Help, dear!" What a grim tragedy it is! In three acts; two that are terrible. How the lightning pen of Carlyle fills in the dialogue and the pictures. Act III.: She stands before the executioners. A young, fair creature, with a still, calm smile, and a maidenly blush on her face. And then—— But move on again, good Jean; crack thy whip. Exorcise that poor ghost of the Terror. On again, friend Jean. We have arrived. To be sure, the grand hotel of the Place Royale is very full. They have turned hundreds away. While we are discussing the situation, some provincials are joking each other about having to sleep in the stables. But we are English: it is even suspected that we are Americans. Madame, who jingles her keys as she condoles with us on the difficulties of the situation, will do her best for us. All their charges are, of course, doubled during the *fêtes*. That we are quite prepared for, we say: "Thank you, Jean—— Yes, bring in the luggage." I recur to that wish in your behalf, *mon ami*, may you see Caen as I saw it. There are balconies to those chambers that overlook the Place Royale, balconies

and French windows, and at night the murmur of the street comes up to you like a distant voice. In the morning you seem to be on a level with the clocks that beat out the hours one after another as if they slumbered over 'Time, and drew it out into long shadowy minutes that rest between their flights like swallows on a pilgrimage.

At midnight the last fragments of the crowd gathered together to extinguish their torches and make their good-nights. As the clock struck they were leaving the Place Royale. Not a soul of them drunk. In London gin and swipes would have put these fag-ends of the procession by the ears, and laid the rest by the heels. Even the old cathedral cities I have enumerated would have heard the howling of tipsy revellers all night, and the next day the police-charges would have been many and sad. Lager beer is the salvation of New York. I suspect the mild beer and cider of Caen have something to do with the phenomenon just mentioned. Our "strong waters," gin and whisky, are the twin curses of the British Empire. I looked out upon Caen the next morning at six. The men who had sung and marched the night before were wending their way to work, their *sabots* awakening the echoes of the otherwise silent streets. Burnt-out Chinese lanterns flapped to and fro in the morning breeze, and the city clocks with a pleasant disagreement struck the hour. The old houses lifted their ornamental gables to the sky. Flags and streamers made patches of colour against the grey stone of the streets. The repose of the scene was intensified by the contrast with the glare and brightness and festal shouts of the previous night. Then I fancy there is always a peculiar charm in looking down upon a city without mixing with the people, getting the picture of it in your mind without locomotion, seeing it through a window, and feeling that you are outside all its social and human influences. Cowper conveys something of what I mean in his own beautiful and poetic way when he says:—

"'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,
To peep at such a world ; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd ;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the ear."

Not that Caen ever "roars," she is gentle as the first footsteps of summer. They go on their way, the people of Caen, with unobtrusive tread, slipping into some old church now and then to say a prayer. There is an influence of calm in the air. You rest while you walk at Caen. And yet they talk of progress and liberty and

other stirring things, and if you take up the local *Itinéraire du Chemin de fer de Caen à la Mer*, you find quite a spirited account of the march which Caen is making with the other great cities of Christendom. The pilgrims who journeyed, thirty years ago, on the road from Caen to La Délivrande, and having finished their orisons at the Petit Enfer never suspected that a day would come when a steam-engine pulling along large trucks would carry bathers from Caen to the shore of Luc in an hour. How much more graphically this little French guide tells its story than would any similar handbook in England! It is quite a literary performance in its way. Let us pick out the brief retrospect of travelling thirty years ago from the well-printed and nicely annotated pages. It seems, then, that the only means of transport which existed at that time was a sort of light dog-cart, which is not yet forgotten by those who used to risk their lives in this whimsical conveyance. A true type of the antediluvian coach, the carriage of M. Cabieux was a box of a rectangular form and divided into two parts, the interior a place of torture, the exterior a *coupé* open to the rain, the dust, and the wind; the whole covered with a cart-tilt, patched and mended. In the front, on a chair covered with straw, was seated the driver, vainly endeavouring to excite two wretched screws with his shouts and his whip. On leaving Caen the equipage left behind it,—

“Dans un chemin montant, sablonneux, malaise
Et de tous les côtes au soleil exposé,”—

and took its way towards La Délivrande with a *nonchalance* which was impressive. This vehicle has been superseded, this rough and sandy road has been completely transformed. Instead of *la voiture de M. Cabieux*, the highway, from June to September, is busy with breaks, dog-carts, Américaines, and barouches, interspersed with little omnibuses belonging to the various towns, with banners waving in the breeze.

IN the first days of September this procession of holiday-makers on the road from Caen to the sea gives place to one of an entirely different character. From Luc, Langrune, Lion, Douvres, come carts and waggons of all descriptions to the fair which is held at Caen on St. Michael's Day, and devoted to the sale of the onion. This vegetable is an important product of this part of the coast, and the onion fair at Caen has its prototype in the famous fairs of Nottingham and Birmingham of the English midlands. The Caen fair dates back to a high antiquity. Granted by William the Conqueror to the Abbé of St. Etienne, it was first held on St. Laurent's Day; but this feast clashing with wheat harvest, it

was transferred, in the sixteenth century, to the present fixture. De Bras relates that in 1461 "Ambroise de Levé, a Norman knight, made a great enterprise at a fair which was held at the Bourg-l'Abbé. With seven hundred horsemen he took all the English merchants, and caused several to be killed." My little friend, the Itinéraire adds, "This knight took off as well all the goods exposed for sale, and hereby conformed to the practical spirit of his countrymen." These persistent English traders, how dearly they have paid for the shopkeeping proclivities of the race in all ages and in all lands. This fair of St. Michael was formerly held in the close of Benvalu, where now stands the new railway station. In those days there were to be seen, pell-mell, bags of onions, parsnips, peas, apples, beasts, and people. In the midst of an indescribable din, there the merchants transacted their business. In the Norman inns, with their large rooms decorated with old tapestry, circulated great flagons of cider. Sometimes enormous casks were broached in the open air, giving forth copious streams of the Norman nectar, which men and women quaffed with equal gusto; the women in cotton bonnets or head-dresses of white handkerchiefs, the *fichus* crossed on the neck; the men in blue blouses, with their whips passed round their shoulders. These, with a crowd of barefooted children, groups of "ambulating merchants," and strings of cattle, must have made up a fine old-fashioned picture. On the next day, under the dews of October, it was not an uncommon sight to see the swineherd and his pupil in a paternal embrace. Even in these modern days, and notwithstanding my experience of that first night of the *fêtes*, the evening after the feast of St. Michael has some curious scenes for remembrance on the road home, the onion-merchants meeting *en route*, companies of bathers coming back to Caen with the first cold winds of the autumn. *Les braves paysans* return in disorder, holding in their hands either a large lantern fixed on a pole, or a candle covered with an oil-paper shade, and tipsily affected by copious draughts of Calvados brandy. "One may see their lanterns stop instinctively before every wayside inn."

ONE of the most ancient cities of Europe, Caen has no equal in respect of its examples of Gothic buildings. It is difficult to think of any city at the moment that offers such peculiar attractions to an Englishman. Something akin to his own ancient cities, it is yet altogether different in its general physiognomy, if one may speak of the physiognomy of a town. Julian Hawthorne, who has inherited something of the poetical power of motive analysis from his father, thinks it is with communities as with individuals.

“Men are a kind of hieroglyphic writing, hard to decipher; but they translate themselves into their houses, and we may read them there at leisure.” Judged by this standard, the people of Normandy are not a cleanly race of people. Their back-doors open upon an atmosphere of bad odours. In singular contrast, and to be credited in their favour, are the order and sweetness of their kitchens. This develops an incongruity of character which requires careful study to comprehend. But if the men of Caen are to be estimated according to their building arrangements, they are an enviable people. If their walls and pavements and roadways are but the incarnation of the true city which primarily inheres in the brains and wills of the citizens, then indeed may we sit at the feet of those sober men of Caen and learn. Swedenborg says cities represent doctrines. Caen is, then, symbolical of a calm settled faith in the God of popes and priests, and troubles itself no further with controversy. All is finished at Caen. There is no reason for change. It is a lusty old man, who has worn buckled shoes and patches, now in modern dress, clean, white-haired, hearty, and full of reminiscences of good wine and pleasant friends. On the score of cleanliness and convenience Caen might be considered a modern city, and yet we walk here in the footsteps of William the Conqueror and his brother Rufus. It presents none of the dilapidations which some old English cities show, though its Abbayes aux Hommes and aux Dames were founded eight hundred years ago. The streets are in better order than any other French provincial city I have visited. Only once in a way does that offensive odour which is so common to the Continent of Europe invade the air. The conduits and fountains that supply the citizens with fresh water are turned on at intervals into the gutters, and thence flush the sewers. This old-fashioned method must have many advantages. At all events, it is pleasant. Who that knows the lovely old city of Wells, in England, does not find in his memory the cheerful trickle of the water that irrigates the old streets? How much better one can understand the adventures of Andersen’s tin soldiers with these street torrents in one’s mind. Caen is well paved and lighted. The houses, full of picturesque examples of Gothic architecture, are built of the stone which was used in the construction of the Tower of London, and which in the olden days of warfare was “respected” at sea by the English cruisers. Time has softened the colour of the stone, and brought the streets into the same grey hues as the churches. The windows are fitted with exterior shutters, familiar in Continental and American cities, and popular at Brighton and Ramsgate on our own side of the water. But where, except perhaps at Rouen, shall we look for

the turrets and pinnacles and the splendid confusion of the Gothic method which characterised the city of Caen? As in painting so it is in architecture, beauty depends on light and shade. In buildings this is obtained by the openings or projections in the surface. "If," says an authoritative writer on the subject, "these tend to produce horizontal lines, the building must be deemed Grecian, however whimsically the doors and windows may be constructed. If, on the contrary, the shadows give a preference to perpendicular lines, the general character of the building will be Gothic." The shadows at Caen can hardly be said to be consulted as to their "preference." They fall here and there in deep patches, and here and there in long dark shafts. They tempt you into picturesque archways, they seem to vignette quaint pictures in stone and make rich sombre foregrounds for the bases of old towers and the resting-places of ancient arches. I suppose its chief architectural triumph, if not the world's finest example of Gothic art, is the church of St. Pierre, which looks down upon you from its graceful tower as you saunter along the street of St. Jean. A great German writer has pronounced the "Renaissance" work at the east end of the building as "the masterpiece of the epoch," while the other extremity of the building is occupied by "the loveliest steeple and tower in the world." Prout has painted it. Pugin used to talk of the majesty of the tall lancet windows of its western façade. To-day it still remains a testimony to the inspiration of the great artists and builders of the past, and a glorious memento of the religious devotion of the founders of Christianity in Europe. The interior is spoiled in an artistic sense, as is the case with many of the Continental churches, by tawdry pictures, wooden candles, ugly confessional-boxes, glass chandeliers, and other anachronistic blemishes upon architectural form and beauty. Some of the sculptured pendants of the aisles are very original, and there are legends in stone in the capitals of columns which are not a little curious; notably "Launcelot crossing the sea on his sword," "Aristotle bridled and ridden by the mistress of Alexander," and other reminiscences of ancient fable and romance. But from an historical point of view, the most interesting building in Caen is the cathedral church of St. Etienne, or the Abbaye aux Hommes (so called in contradistinction to the Abbaye aux Dames, or La Sainte Trinité, founded by William's wife), where the Norman conqueror of England was buried. A plain marble slab in the chancel marks the spot where his bones once rested. The jealous custodian of the place tells you that a great deal of what was William still lies there. One might quote the gravedigger in *Hamlet* in reply, for the vault is certainly now empty of any human remains

of the Conqueror. The Huguenots broke the grave open in 1562, and dispersed the mouldering contents. One thigh-bone alone was preserved and restored to its former resting-place. Why, indeed, "may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?" The revolutionists of 1793 felt that it would be eminently consoling to their feelings, and an advantage to their just cause, to disperse that last thighbone. They tore open the famous tomb which the Huguenots had violated, and from that day William has indeed become but a memory. There is not even dust enough left of him to stop a bung-hole. He was as unfortunate in his funeral as he was in his proposed long rest. If he conquered when alive, he was a very dead lion indeed when his day was over. His funeral was interrupted by a bystander, who claimed the ground, from which he said his father had been illegally ejected to build the church. The citizen was backed by his fellows, and the bishop who was conducting the solemn ceremony paid sixty sous to the claimant for the dead monarch's grave-space. When the coffin was lowered it struck the side of the vault; the corpse was visible, and it made itself so offensive to the olfactory sense of the crowd that the rites were hurriedly concluded, and Henry his son, the priests and the citizens, went away contented with the briefest leave-taking.

En Passant.

FOR some time it did not seem likely that Mr. Mayer's efforts to get the Comédie Française over here would be attended with success. "Les difficultés d'exécution qui s'étaient présentées tout de suite à mon esprit au sujet de l'offre que vous avez bien voulu me faire verbalement d'abord, puis confirmer par votre lettre à la date du 18 courant, ont également," wrote M. Perrin to him in March, 1876, "paru insurmontables au Comité d'administration de la Comédie-Française. Du moment que le sentiment de la majorité du Comité est en ceci conforme à l'opinion que je vous avais déjà exprimée, il est impossible de donner suite à votre projet." Mr. Mayer, however, was not to be beaten.

"THE other evening," writes a New York correspondent, "I was favoured by having Madame Gerster and her husband spend an evening at my house. We found her to be a plump, fair-faced young woman, of about twenty-three. Her eyes are large and expressive, and her form as round as the Torso of Milo. She speaks Italian, Hungarian, German, and English. Her English has a French accent, like that of Madame Roze. In reply to my questions she said, "I was born in Kaschau, Hungary. I am a real Hungarian, like Kossuth. My father was a carpenter in Kaschau. I used to go to school and work at home. I was always happy and always singing. I sang about my daily work, as a bird sings, because my heart was full of joy and music. Sometimes poorer people stood in front of the window. I thought that it was a great compliment, and I would sing just as well as I could. Well, one day when father was out to work and mother was away at the market I felt very happy. I was just twelve years old then, was ironing, and singing with all my might. When I stopped, a man at the window clapped his hands and said, 'Ah, little girl, you sing like a bird.' 'And who are you?' I asked. 'Well, I'm Helmesberger. I'm the musical director from Vienna. I'm going to give some concerts here in the village, and when I get through in Kaschau I'm going back to Vienna; and if you want to go with me, I'll take you,'" he added. "Then," said Madame Gerster, laughing, "I remember how they fixed me up. Father was to pay for my tuition, and mother was to keep me in clothes. I remember how I cried and laughed and sang all the way to Vienna. There Professor Helmesberger taught me to spell, and I became a pupil of Madame Marchesi."

It is to be hoped that when the company of the Comédie-Française come over they will bring with them the historic bell which does duty at their theatre in funeral processions, &c. Three centuries ago this bell

was in the tower of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and was used to give the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew. During the Revolution Marie-Joseph Chénier induced the Convention to present the bell to the theatre, in order that it might be tolled at the back of the stage in his *Charles IX.*, when the hour of the Huguenots was supposed to have come. From that time it has never gone out of the players' possession. Of late years the occasions for employing it have been few and far between, but you may be sure of hearing it if *Marion Delorme* is represented in the Rue de Richelieu.

THE first operatic effort of a Roumanian composer was produced at the National Theatre, Bucharest, on the 6th February, in the presence of the Court and a large audience. *Verful cu dor* (The Summit of Desire), as the opera is entitled, had the attraction of a libretto written by the reigning Princess Elizabeth of Roumania, who has adopted the pseudonym of Madame de Laroc. The libretto is highly poetical, and contributed more to the success of the opera than the music, which was composed by the Court pianist, Liubicz. The opera was well performed by the members of the local Italian Opera Company, but the *mise en scène* was shabby.

THE playgoing world must have heard with deep regret of the death of Mr. John Clarke, which occurred on the 20th February. This genial comedian was originally a photographer in Farringdon Street, but in 1852 gave up that occupation and went on the stage. From 1858 till 1864, except for a short period, he was the leading comedian at the Strand Theatre, and his performances there in the way of broad farce and thorough-going burlesque will not soon be forgotten by those who witnessed them. In 1865, when Miss Marie Wilton, with whom he had been associated at the Strand, opened the Prince of Wales's Theatre, he at once enlisted under her banner, and his impersonations of the junior Chodd in *Society* and Hugh Chalcot in *Ours* gave him claims to the rank of a sterling actor. His last engagement was at the Criterion, where he played in, among many other pieces, *The Porter's Knot*. The chief characteristic of his acting was dry humour. The cause of his death was consumption, aggravated by grief at the loss of his wife, known to playgoers as Miss Furtado.

In the case of *Orsini v. Mapleson*, the judge of the Westminster County Court, before whom the case was tried, has granted the plaintiff a new trial on the grounds that a letter of Signor Calsi, the conductor in the autumn season, under whom the plaintiff served as "*Maestro Accompagnatore* and Assistant Conductor," was inconsistent with the evidence given by the said Signor Calsi on the first trial. Much evidence of an important nature will be brought forward by the plaintiff on the next occasion. The action was to recover salary due under an agreement with Mr. J. H. Mapleson, Signor Orsini having been dismissed without any notice, on the ground of a letter of complaint addressed to Mr. Hunt by three of the artists engaged at Her Majesty's Theatre. Signor Orsini was Assistant Professor of Counterpoint and Composition in the Royal

College of Music at Naples. He came first to England as private accompanist to Signor Tamberlik and Madame Nautier Didiée, fifteen years ago. Having been called away to serve in the Italian army, he was appointed (by competition) the Conductor of the Band to his regiment, a post which he held for eight years. He is the author of an elaborate work, entitled *Treatise on Instrumentation*, adopted as a text-book by the Royal College of Santa Cecilia, at Rome, and the Royal College at Naples, and is the composer of other musical works of great merit. He is also an excellent pianiste. To dismiss such a man without any notice, after he had assisted for three weeks at the full rehearsal of six operas (including *Carmen*), is a step which certainly requires very strong justification. The judge's decision in the first trial was that the plaintiff, though proved to be capable in French and Italian music, was proved not to have been capable in German music. This is a musical dilemma which requires solution. The case will be an important one, as bearing on the validity of engagements as made at Her Majesty's Opera, and some curious revelations of the internal economy of the musical world behind the scenes may be expected.

IN a letter to the *Academy* Miss Charlotte Carmichael seeks to show that the weird sisters in *Macbeth* are the Urda, Verdandi, and Skulda of Scandinavian mythology in other forms. The conception of them, she says, seems as complex yet unique as that of Caliban. There are *three* of them. Of these the third is the special prophetess, while the first takes cognisance of the past, and the second of the present, in affairs connected with humanity. These are the tasks of Urda, Verdandi, and Skulda. The first begins by asking, "When shall we three meet again?" The second decides the time: "When the battle's lost and won." The third, the future, prophesies: "That will be ere set of sun." The first again asks "Where?" The second decides, "Upon the heath." The third, the future, prophesies: "There to meet with Macbeth." But their rôle is most clearly brought out in the famous "Hails." *1st Urda* [Past]. "Hail! Thane of Glamis." *2nd Verdandi* [Present]. "Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor." *3rd Skulda* [The Future]. "All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter." The same order is observed in their conference with Banquo, which is the more striking since Shakspeare purposely alters the order given in Holinshed.

M. CLAIRVILLE, the facile vaudevillist, died early in February. The son of a prompter at the Bobino, a house of doubtful repute in one of the lowest districts of Paris, he began life as an actor at Madame Saqui's Theatre, but made as little money in the profession as the unfortunate comedian to whom Le Sage refers in the *Diable Boiteux*. It is related that once, having sold his black stockings to get a dinner, he blacked his legs, and that the audience, discovering what he had done, waxed so wroth that the curtain had to be rung down. M. D'Ennery advised him to write for the stage instead of acting. This advice he took, and from that time until his death works of a more or less dramatic character

came from his pen in rapid succession. It was he who wrote the libretti for the most popular comic operas of our time—*La Fille de Madame Angot* and *Les Cloches de Corneville*. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, in support of the theory that Clairville, whose real name was Nicholai, had the pseudonym forced upon his parents, calls attention to the following scrap of dialogue in his *Mariage d'Olympe*. Floridor, an actor, says, with a tear in his eye, "My father was an honourable tradesman, and would have cursed me had I dragged his name behind the scenes and in taverns." "In what business was your father?" "He was a tinker." "And his name?" "Matthew." Clairville had several collaborateurs more or less known to fame; but one of his most assiduous fellow-labourers was a M. Miot or Miotte, a clerk in an office, who would never allow his name to appear on the bills, and who never went to any theatre except the Batignolles, a fifth-rate house, close to which he resided—a strange pair to keep Paris in a roar.

BERLIN has lost one of its most prolific minor dramatists in Herr Salingré, who died on the 4th February, after a long illness. One of his best-known works is *Die Reise durch Berlin in 80 Stunden*, which attained immense popularity, not only in Berlin, but throughout Germany, its local incidents and title having been changed several times to suit the circumstances of other German towns, just as Mr. Boucicault's *Streets of London* was produced at many English provincial and American towns with changed scenes and title. Amongst Herr Salingré's other best-known works may be named *Pechschulze*, *Die Africanerin in Kalau*, *Des Friseurs letztes Stündlein*, and *Preussen in Sachsen*. He was in very embarrassed circumstances during his last years.

WHEN Miss Lydia Thompson took her last trip across the ocean one of Mr. Beecher's elders was on board, and in a Christian spirit was exceedingly attentive to that "very nice little Mrs. Henderson." He wrapped her in his own shawl on the storm-tossed deck; he brought the cup of tea to assuage the blinding headache caused by the spray; he shared the prayer-book at the marine service in the saloon on the Sabbath; he mingled his voice with hers in the harmonious strains of the Old Hundredth. Not a word breathed a soul till the last day; the joke was too good to be curtailed by an hour. Then they opened out on him in a body; Mrs. Henderson was Lydia Thompson, and he had been paying undue attention to the great burlesque blonde! The poor man is still living, and hopes of his recovery are entertained

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE proverb which tells us that it never rains but it pours, seems to apply with special force to theatrical affairs; nor is it difficult to divine why this should be the case. The instinct of managers naturally leads them to provide, or strive to provide, playgoers with the form of play which they like best. Like other caterers for the public, they watch the demand more often than they attempt the difficult task of creating it, or of controlling it by artificial means. Occasionally the more enterprising spirits among them may succeed in guiding their patrons' taste into a new direction; but for the most part they are content if, having gauged this taste by observing the results of their rivals' experiments, they can only supply the dramatic fare which it is the fashion of the day to command. For this following in recently-beaten tracks they have often been blamed. They have been accused of feeble and slavish imitation, of lack of initiatory power, and of fatal tendency to copy the faults of successful programmes, without being able to catch their merits. But it must be recollected that those who blame them on this account are the dramatic critics, who naturally grow sick of seeing the same motive set to work in one after another of the comedies which they are called upon to judge, and become heartily weary of watching varieties of the same plot illustrated in successive three-act farces. In this respect the dramatic critics are, it must be recollected, scarcely representative of the great mass of playgoers, who, in London at all events, do not and cannot make a practice of seeing every new play that comes out. The population of London and its suburbs, to leave out of the question the thousands of visitors from the country who pass daily through the capital, is amply sufficient to support three or four duplicate performances. As we see when a theatre has a piece which really takes the public fancy, it is simply impossible for all its would-be visitors to gratify their wish in any period to be counted in weeks or even months; and there is room, so far as that is concerned, for two or three simultaneous imitations, more or less close, without any one of them interfering with the other. Just now the fancy of playgoers chances to be for what is called farcical comedy, that is to say, for comedy which allows itself more license in its laughable plot and episodes than is permitted in comedy proper. The fancy may possibly be accounted for by that recent dearth of good new comedies of the higher order, the mention of which is so much disliked by our playwrights. The subject for these farcical comedies which has of late been popular is conjugal infidelity, either real or supposed. The situations in which a husband given to flirting with strange women are found highly diverting, and the fun becomes all

the more fast and furious when the wife, who is neglected, if not otherwise injured, assumes the worst on evidence which her husband, who is more innocent than she thinks, cannot explain away. Risky episodes can be made ostensibly harmless by the expedient of holding the sinner up to ridicule, and the flippancy with which vice is treated is thought to be satisfactorily atoned for by the unvarying triumph which virtue is allowed to win in the end.

BETWEEN *The Snowball*, *A Gay Deceiver*, and *Truth*, three new plays produced during the past month at the Strand, the Royalty, and the Criterion theatres respectively, there is a strong generic likeness. The former two, which are from the pens of Mr. Sydney Grundy and Mr. Mortimer, are from the French, whilst the last, written by Mr. Bronson Howard, and called during its American career *Hurricanes*, if not French in origin is decidedly French in tone. The first act of Mr. Grundy's comedy promises a great deal more than is performed in either of the acts which follows. A neat little plot is unfolded in a series of neat little schemes. A husband who has been to see the *Pink Dominoes* without telling his wife of his movements, is entangled by that indignant lady in an ingeniously-woven net of retribution, and the result of the punishment devised by Mrs. Featherstone for her spouse early becomes highly diverting. The unfortunate man is made to believe that a compromising note which he intended for his wife has been received by his maid-servant, and the maid-servant is bribed by her mistress to keep up the delusion, though without being told what the intrigue is all about. The imbroglio thus elaborated is entertaining, and in its earlier phases is not wanting in the art of clever construction. Later on, however, the situations are allowed to repeat themselves, in view of filling up the conventional three acts, and *The Snowball* seems in danger of melting before its time. Mr. Grundy's dialogue is smart and telling, and he has the advantage of great assistance from the hands of Mr. W. H. Vernon, who plays the part of the puzzled and worried hero with an admirable simulation of genuine distress. The part of a maid-servant, who struggles between her greed for bribes and her curiosity, is acted by Miss L. Venne with delightful humour; and Miss Ada Swanborough, with Mr. Harry Cox, are both seen to more advantage than they have of late.

UNLIKE *The Snowball*, *A Gay Deceiver* improves greatly from the moment when its first act is over. Of it Mr. Mortimer has made a rattling light-hearted, preposterous piece, which, if it had been produced at the Criterion, where people look for pieces of its kind, would probably have made a success such as its original *La Papillonne* never secured. Here the husband is probably animated by more disloyal thoughts than his wife imagines, for he seems, according to his own account, to run after pretty-looking women whom he meets. His punishment is provided in a mistake which he makes when he pays his worthless attentions to a lady who is the bosom friend of his wife, and who constitutes herself the injured woman's defender. This lively dame leads her admirer a ridiculous dance, an easy business, as he permits himself to be blindfolded, while he is introduced into what he believes to be the presence of his enchantress, and is thus tricked into kneeling at the feet of his

neglected wife. *A Gay Deceiver* is full of bustle and noise, as in addition to the *dramatis personæ* mentioned, there are introduced a fire-eating Irish officer, represented with spirit by Mr. Leonard Boyne, and a Yorkshire squire, played, as Yorkshiremen can only be, by Mr. Billington. The chief burden, however, falls upon the shoulders of Miss Fowler, who portrays with animation, only occasionally exaggerated, the rôle of the fair young widow whose high-spirited plot meets with such success. Mr. Mortimer has done his adaptation judiciously, and skims over difficulties which would on the English stage defy serious treatment.

THE keynote of *Truth* at the Criterion is struck, or is intended to be struck, by the verse which heads the programme, and which tells us that,

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of Heaven are hers;
But error, wounded, withers with pain,
And dies among his worshippers."

But truth is treated in the approved spirit of parody. The husbands and lovers—"four strong men," as they are called—who here deceive their respective wives and sweethearts, and are punished for their deceit, have, after all, not been so very guilty. They have only outraged the prudish Quaker circle in which they live by attending a fancy-dress ball at the Royal Aquarium. When they come home to the hero's country house, fagged after what they call a night of philanthropic work, they are discovered by their host's vigilant mother-in-law, who overhears their unwary discussion of their frolics; and they are thereupon solemnly cast off by the injured ladies of the family, who act throughout in unison. If the Quakeresses' indignation is of the nature of burlesque, the stratagem by which the strong men strive to right themselves is singularly feeble. They make a sham confession, to the effect that they were guilty of the frolics of which mention has been made, but that the scene of their suspicious flirtations with young ladies in suggestive costumes was the house of a friend in town, where they were rehearsing a charade to be played at home as a surprise to the heroine on her approaching birthday. Whether to such strict Puritans as these ladies the charade would not seem as objectionable as the ball seems doubtful; but at any rate the explanation is accepted, and does excellently until the unexpected arrival of the lady at whose house the rehearsal is said to have taken place. Once more the story-tellers suffer, and once more they find a remedy for the misery which—much to their credit—they endure in the frowns and tears of the unreasonable dames. This time they tell the truth, and on doing so they are, of course, promptly forgiven. In ingenuity of construction, and in dramatic force of any kind, *Truth* is decidedly inferior to *A Gay Deceiver* and *Snowball*, but it is full of fun of a certain kind, and keeps amused an audience ready for amusement. As our brief *résumé* has shown, there is no offensive element in the plot, as there was in that of the *Pink Dominos*. All the greater, therefore, is the pity that some of the points made in the dialogue are in such exceedingly bad taste. Such a *double entente* as that which refers to a lady changing her dress before

her husband is simply vulgar, and can only disgust the more refined portion of the audience. The comedy is acted efficiently, especially by Mr. Charles Wyndham, whose fitness for better work does not prevent his showing genuine art wherever in *Truth* he finds an opportunity. Cleverly contrasted with the story-tellers' weakness is the able lying of the sleek hypocrite, so delicately sketched by Mr. Standing, and Miss Rorke is to be complimented upon the unaffected sincerity which she gives to the grief of the young wife. Much more point would be given to *Truth* if the surroundings of a strict Quaker household were suggested in the mounting.

IN *Uncle*, at the Gaiety, Mr. H. J. Byron gives something more than a suggestion of the self-same subject treated in the three other new pieces, upon which comment has been made. He, however, makes husband and wife mutually suspicious, and suspicious without the slightest foundation. In order to conciliate a stern uncle who has forbidden his nephew to marry, the hero is driven to pass off his bride as the wife of a friend who happens to be at his house. Of this friend he is already foolishly jealous, whilst his wife, on her part, is led to believe that she has married one who has been a gay dog before he settled down. Complication is further introduced by the appearance on the scene of the *soi-disant* husband's *fiancée*, and by the conduct of Uncle, who has been completely hoodwinked by the stratagem, and conducts himself accordingly. *Uncle*, which from its position on the Gaiety programme, has necessarily to be a trifle of the lightest kind, serves its purpose admirably, and provides both Mr. Terry, as the cowardly husband, and Mr. Royce, as the misogynist uncle, with characters which they are able to make thoroughly amusing. Much skill is employed in preserving from first to last the airy tone of the piece, and probability is never needlessly set at defiance. The dialogue is characteristic of an author who writes the best comic conversation now supplied to our stage, and the hand of experience is traceable in the way in which the action is manipulated. Mr. Terry is, of course, able to make the alternate jealousy and fear of the hero irresistibly ludicrous. Mr. Royce gives a consistent and artistic picture of a conventional character, to which he gives individuality by many subtle touches; and Miss E. Muir and Mr. J. H. Barnes both exhibit a marked advance in their light comedy.

THE popularity of the lyric drama has been fully attested during the current season of the Carl Rosa English Opera Company at Her Majesty's Theatre. At almost every performance the house has been crowded, and amateurs representing all classes of society have received with tokens of delight the works which have been brought forward in rapid succession. Amongst these were three important novelties. On the opening night of the season Mr. J. P. Jackson's English adaptation of Wagner's *Rienzi* was produced. An article by Mr. Henry Hersee on the subject of this opera will be found in another page, and in this place it is only necessary to say that *Rienzi* has been placed on the stage with an unprecedented magnificence of *mise en scène*. The spectacle is superb, and the music is ably interpreted by a fine band of sixty eminent instru-

mentalists led by Mr. Carrodus, by a chorus of conspicuous excellence, and by principal artists, fully qualified for their tasks. Mr. Maas (Rienzi) and Madame Vanzini (Adriano) merit special praise, and the *ensemble* is admirable.

The second novelty was an English version, by Mr. Sidney Manuel, of M. Guiraud's *Piccolino*. The original libretto, written by MM. Victorien Sardou and Charles Nutter, is ably constructed, and affords many opportunities for the introduction of effective music. In Act I., Marthe, a Swiss orphan girl, grieves over the perfidy of her lover, Frederic, a young artist, who had won her affections, and subsequently deserted her. Three of Frederic's fellow-students take refuge in the cottage of the Swiss pastor, by whom Marthe has been adopted, and from their chance conversation she learns that her lover is studying at Rome. She sets out for Italy, and in Act II. appears at Tivoli in the dress of an Italian image-boy: is unrecognised by Frederic, and under the name of "Piccolino" is elected a member of the confraternity of students. Frederic has fallen in love with the Countess Elena Strozzi, whose proud and revengeful brother induces one of his retainers to attempt the assassination of Frederic. In saving her lover's life, Marthe receives a slight wound, and Frederic vows that his little "Piccolino" shall be thenceforth the object of his fraternal care. In the last act the Countess Elena seeks her lover, Frederic, and is confronted by Marthe, who vainly implores her compassion. The Duke of Strozzi's voice is heard; Marthe conceals Elena in a chamber, from which there is an escape to the street, and the lady overhears a conversation in which the duke makes it sufficiently clear that unless Frederic relinquishes Elena, she will be immured in a convent. The terrified Elena seeks safety in flight, but leaves with Marthe a letter, bidding eternal farewell to Frederic. Enraged when he finds that Marthe is the cause of this calamity, he bids her quit his house. She goes to her chamber, resumes her female attire, and throws herself into the Tiber, from which unsavoury stream she is rescued by a boatman, and brought in a fainting state to Frederic, who at once recognises her, and as soon as she is restored to consciousness professes contrition and unbounded affection, and marries her instead of Elena. M. Guiraud's music is pretty, but too light for so large a house as Her Majesty's Theatre. The instrumentation is piquant, and is more attractive than the vocal melodies, which are deficient in originality. The principal soprano song, "Sorrento," is graceful and melodious, but the vocal solos are not equal in merit to the concerted pieces. The work was well executed. Miss Gaylord in the title-character was charming, and Miss Burns as Elena won great favour. Mr. Packard was an icy lover. The minor characters were efficiently filled.

The third novelty was Mr. Henry Hersee's English adaptation of *Carmen*, a work so well known that remarks on the plot and music are needless. The substitution of spoken dialogue (sparingly introduced) for the cumbrous recitations employed on the Italian stage enhanced the success of the work, and in its English dress it is likely to gain further popularity. Madame Selina Dolaro's *Carmen* was a gratifying surprise. She sang with perfect taste,

her voice filled the theatre, and her impersonation of the untamed gipsy was, in many respects, the best that has been seen in this country. Miss Julia Gaylord's graceful acting and delightful singing imparted special charms to the rôle of Micaëla. Mr. Leli (José) and Mr. Walter Bolton (Escamillo) were efficient, and the minor characters were well filled.

Several familiar operas have been produced, notably *The Huguenots*, in which Mr. Maas, as Raoul, proved himself the equal of any tenor on the modern stage, and Madame Vauzini, as Valentina, exhibited vocal and histrionic abilities above the average. A new barytone, Mr. Crotty, as Di Nevers, increased the favourable impression awakened by his successful *debut* as Danny Mann in *The Lily of Killurney*, and Miss Georgina Burns (the Queen) and Miss Yorke (the Page) won well-deserved applause. Mr. Carl Rosa has conducted in his usual masterly style, and has been ably assisted by Signor Randegger, whose skilful direction greatly aided the success of *Carmen*. Thus far the season has been brilliantly successful.

A COUPLE of revivals, each very interesting in its way, have been those of *She Stoops to Conquer*, at the Aquarium, and *The Ladies' Battle* at the Court. In the former Miss Litton distinguishes herself as a Miss Hardcastle who might not only have stepped from a picture of the period, but is able to catch most happily the tone of this high-spirited damsel of the last century. She never forgets to convey the difference of tone between such a play as this and a contemporary comedy, and in this respect Mr. W. Farren and Mrs. Stirling are, of course, worthy of all commendation, though the former artist necessarily misses the youthfulness of a young Marlow. The Tony Lumpkin of Mr. L. Brough is already familiar, and in spite of its tendency towards burlesque is full of a comic spirit which atones for much. *The Ladies' Battle* gives Mrs. Kendal an opportunity of playing a more matronly part than she generally assumes. The result is altogether welcome, and the consummate art of her Countess d'Antreval is only equalled by that of Mr. Hare as the dejected baron, a rôle which lies accurately within his range. Mr. Kendal shows much humour as De Grignon; and if Miss C. Grahame had more experience, she, with Mr. W. Herbert as de Flavigneul, would complete an almost perfect cast. A neat little comedietta, by Mr. Ernest Cuthbert, has been produced at the Vaudeville. Its plot, which is of the slightest, and would be improved by an increase of probability, we might almost say of possibility, shows how a young lady who has been jilted wins the heart of her faithless lover under a disguise, only to make him finally reject the girl whom she personates for her real original self. *Once Again*, as Mr. Cuthbert calls his piece, is written carefully; and if occasionally the young playwright's dialogue is too ambitious, the fault is on the right side, since his ambition is in the direction of polish and point, qualities too seldom met in the modern *lever-de-rêveur*. Miss Illington is a clever and not ungraceful representative of the heroine, and Mr. Hargreaves and Mr. C. W. Garthorne give useful assistance in making the trifle a success.

IN THE PROVINCES.

As the month of February advanced, the hold of pantomime upon the majority of provincial theatres relaxed. In some a second edition was announced, in others it was withdrawn altogether. Generally speaking, however, harlequin and his companions have had a prosperous season, and it is certain that, whatever may be their chances of longevity in London, some years must elapse before their popularity in the country is diminished in any appreciable degree. Courageously ignoring the almanac, many popular players whose names are associated with entertainments of a more or less "legitimate" character have continued their tours. Thus Miss Bateman appeared at Halifax as Mary Warner and other characters which she may be said to have made her own. Mr. Barry Sullivan visited some towns and cities in the North, in each place, it need hardly be recorded, meeting with a gratifying reception. More than ever did Mr. Toole show how much reason his friends have to term him the "Shooting Star." His engagements are rarely longer than for one night, never extend over more than three. In Cambridge, where he appeared about the middle of the month, Mr. Toole enjoyed what is popularly, but somewhat incorrectly, termed an "ovation." "It may be satisfactory to the hundreds who derived so much pleasure and enjoyment from the efforts of Mr. Toole and his company," says the *Undergraduates' Journal*, "to know Mr. Toole and every member of his corps were, on their part, immensely pleased with the way in which they were received, with their appreciative audiences, and the manner in which they showed their appreciation. The only regret, which was equally felt by both parties, was that they were unable to prolong their visit; let us hope, however, that next time Mr. Toole comes to Cambridge (and may it be not far distant) that he will arrange, if possible, for a longer stay. Certainly our friends at Oxford have cause to envy us, for there, in accordance, we believe, with University statutes, no dramatic performance was allowed, and Mr. Toole was obliged to confine himself to his songs, recitations, &c., which, however amusing, certainly do not come up to the pieces to which he treated us. We ought to be grateful to our Vice-Chancellor for being so good, and (we may add) so sensible as not to put his veto on these performances. Talk of Varsity Professors with their caps and gowns! Mr. Toole can beat them hollow in the eccentric costume of a common engine-driver." An allusion to Mr. Irving, in a speech made by Mr. Toole after one performance, led the critic to "express a wish, which we know is widely felt, that the time may not be far distant when he will visit us here; we believe that a reception is awaiting him in Cambridge which will astonish him, and that he will win honours here which will eclipse even those so plenteously bestowed by the University of Trinity, Dublin." Early in the month the thousandth night of *Our Boys* in the provinces was celebrated by a special performance at the Bath theatre, and afterwards by a supper at the Grand Hotel in that city. Two new dramas were produced during the month—the *Regent Orleans*, by Sir Charles Young, at Hull, and *A Debt of Honour*, by Mr. F. W. Broughton; both with success.

IN PARIS.

THE principal event of the last month was the revival at the Théâtre Français of *Mithridate*, with Mdle. Sarah Bernhardt as Monime. This tragedy was originally produced in 1673, just after the great Corneille had brought out his *Pulchérie*. The friends of the younger dramatist, or rather the worshippers of the newly-risen sun, were unjust enough to maintain that the question of his superiority or inferiority to the author of *Le Cid* and *Cinna* should be settled in his favour by a comparison between the two plays we have named, and but too many persons were ready to follow the example thus set them of administering a kick to the dying lion. Posterity, we think, will not echo the cry then raised. Though it has never altogether relaxed its hold of the stage, even when the reaction against the "classical" drama was at its highest, *Mithridate* is the poorest of Racine's tragedies, poorer than *Pulchérie* itself. The plot, albeit a slavish copy of that of *L'Avare*, is neither very interesting in itself nor worthy of a tragedy, and in the versification we miss much of the exquisite music which graces *Phèdre* and other plays from the same pen. The character of Monime—described by Mdle. Clairon as one of the most beautiful and touching ever invented, but at the same time one of the most difficult—is admirably suited to Mdle. Bernhardt, at whose request, indeed, the revival was undertaken. Though ineffectively dressed, she soon captivated the audience, and the refusal to follow Mithridatus to the altar was characterised by a degree of force and dignity beyond praise. In other respects the tragedy was not well cast, and—most unusual occurrence—a want of sufficient rehearsal was often painfully apparent. Another addition has been made to the repertoire of the theatre in a one-act comedy by MM. Meilhac and Halévy, entitled *Le Petit Hôtel*. The story is analogous to that of *L'Etranger*, but is told, of course, in a different way and with a different dramatic object. Mdle. Samary heads the cast, supported by MM. Coquelin aîné, Thiron, and Coquelin cadet. *Les Amants de Vérone* has been transferred from the dismantled Salle Ventadour to the Gaîté, where it will probably remain for some time, by reason of M. Capoul's graceful and spirited Romeo. Juliet is now played by Mdle. Ambre, about whom the less is said the better. The latest novelty at the Odéon, a five-act comedy called *Samuel Brohl*, written by M. Henri Meilhac on the basis of M. Cherbuliez's novel, has not succeeded. The play, like the story, has little or no dramatic force, and the action is exceedingly slow. Samuel is the son of a poor innkeeper in Galicia, and is bought in his boyhood by a Russian lady of rank. Escaping from her after the lapse of some years, he assumes the name of a friend who has died in his arms, and in this guise would win the affections of a blameless girl if the Russian lady did not appear on the scene in the nick of time to defeat his project. MM. Meilhac and Halévy have achieved another success at the Palais Royal by a farical comedy entitled *Le Mari de la Débutante*. The fun is extracted from the distress of a young clerk who finds that his wife, having suddenly won considerable distinction on the lyric stage, is surrounded by butterflies, but who is easily reconciled to his

fate as the advantages incident to her high salary become apparent. The piece is humorously conducted, the second act being particularly amusing. Mdle. Legault, until recently of the Gymnase, plays the heroine. The long-continued prosperity of the Vaudeville has met with a check. Its last new piece, *L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski*, founded upon a novel by M. Cherbuliez,—whose works would seem to be just now in great request by dramatists,—was produced only to be withdrawn. The plot was not only intensely repulsive, but—far worse fault in the eyes of a Paris audience—improbable and clumsily worked out. Mdle. Pierson and M. Pierre Berton were in the cast, but could not save the piece. A countess, in order to obtain the release from confinement of a man whom she loves, induces him to tell a falsehood by promising the last proof of her affection, and then, ashamed of him for what he has done, involuntarily turns against him. The lover, however, is led to believe that the promise is kept, the place of the countess being supplied at a critical hour by another person. *Héloïse et Abélard* occupies the bill at the Renaissance. At the Noveautés, in a piece called *Les Deux Nababs*, Miss Munroe made her first appearance on the Paris stage. “Her merit,” writes M. Sarcy, “consists only in handsome shoulders and arms and an elegant figure. A song which is more than lewd is put into her mouth, and she sings it as if she did not understand it, and with a strong Britannic accent and one of those acid voices which produce on one’s ears the effect of an unripe lemon.” On the other hand, M. Edouard Fournier, of the *Patrie*, held that the somewhat strange gracefulness of Miss Kate Munroe, and her singularly pleasing singing of the *gigue*, written for her by M. Cœdès, are an additional attraction. M. Fournier is undoubtedly nearer the truth, for had it not been for Miss Munroe the piece must have failed, and fail it did not. But then M. Sarcy is nothing if not singular.

IN BERLIN.

THE only novelties produced at the Royal Playhouse in the course of the past month were two short pieces, the first of which was *Eine Schachparthie*, a translation of Signor Giacosa’s dramatic poem, *Una partita a Scacchi* (A Game of Chess), which was originally produced at Naples in April, 1873, and still maintains its place on the Italian stage. It is a one-act piece in verse, and the easy, rhythmical flow of the original has been happily reproduced by the translator, who does not disclose his name. The scene is laid in the Vale of Aosta, in the chivalrous days of the fourteenth century. Old Renato is sitting with his daughter Iolanda by the fireside in his castle one autumn evening, when his friend Count Fombrona arrives, accompanied by a handsome young squire named Fernando. The visitors have just had a dangerous encounter with a band of robbers, in which Fernando has displayed much wisdom and courage. Renato at once becomes interested in the young man, and questions him about his parentage. Fernando replies that he is an orphan, and owes all he has to his own exertions; he irritates the old man by his boastful tone, and as he declares himself as skilful in games as in

arms, Renato proposes to him a game of chess with his daughter on these conditions,—that if he wins he shall receive the hand of Iolanda, and if he loses he shall forfeit his life. The game begins; the two old men sitting apart, and chatting. At first the fates are adverse to Fernando, who gazes into the eyes of the fair Iolanda instead of watching the board, but, gradually, his words of love and his glowing descriptions of his southern home distract the attention of the maiden, and her position becomes very unsafe. Renato grows anxious and seeks to interrupt the game, but the young couple persist in finishing it, and Iolanda at last guides Fernando's hand to the move which checkmates her, and makes her his bride. The little piece was highly successful; the *mise en scène* being eminently calculated to bring the audience into a romantic frame of mind, and the lovers being gracefully represented by Fräulein Meyer and Herr Ludwig, while Herr Berndal and Herr Kahle played the parts of the old men with good effect. This poetical reminiscence of the Middle Ages was followed by a very modern one-act comedy by Frau Hedwig Dohm, entitled *Die Ritter vom Goldenen Kalbe* (The Knights of the Golden Calf). The heroine is a rich heiress, who suspects her numerous admirers of being worshippers of the golden calf, and puts them to a severe test by spreading a rumour that her wealth has no reality, rewarding with her hand him who stands the test successfully. The piece, though not very dramatic, pleased by its vivacious dialogue. The programme ended with a revival of the *Kaiser und Müllerin* of Herr F. W. Gubitz, with Fräulein Bergmann as the miller's widow, and Herr Berndal as the Emperor. On the 22nd of January the 150th anniversary of Lessing's birth was celebrated by an excellent performance of his *Minna von Barnhelm*. The only other prominent event of the past month was a revival of Gutzkow's five-act tragedy, *Uriel Acosta*, which was written in 1846, and still maintains its place on the German stage. The performance was highly successful, Herr Ludwig's rendering of the title part being masterly, and the Rabbi Ben Akiba and De Silva finding excellent representatives in Herren Klein and Berndal, while Fräulein Meyer, as the heroine, delivered the famous line, "Er wird geliebt, glaubt besseren Propheten," in such an inspired tone as to excite the enthusiasm of the audience.

At the Residenz Theater, *Mademoiselle de Belleisle* continued on the bills for a fortnight, and was succeeded on the 29th January by a German version of M. Sardou's *Bourgeois de Pontarcy*. The comic scenes of the earlier acts, which satirise the manners of French provincial life, proved more attractive than the dramatic scenes of the later acts, which are so loosely connected with the comic part of the play, and have the further disadvantage of being extremely improbable. Frau Niemann-Raabe played the part of Madame Trabut, the Mayor's wife, with wonderful art, but raised the character to an importance which tended to further upset the balance of a very ill-balanced play. Frau Elise Haase represented the Baronne de Saint-André naturally and tastefully, and with great distinction of manner, while Herr Friedrich Haase gave a finished portrait of the *avocat*, Brochat. These three guests carried off the chief honours of the performance. Of the stock

company, Frau Claar-Delia was an over-lachrymose Marcelle, and Fräulein Kafka an unsatisfactory *ingénue*; but Herr Keppler was an effective Fabrice, and Herr Beckmann played Trabut, the mayor, with much comic power. A fortnight exhausted the attractions of M. Sardou's piece, and the *Fourchambault* was then revived pending the production of something new.

IN VIENNA.

At the Burgtheater, the only noteworthy event of the past month was the revival of Schiller's *Don Carlos*, which had not been played on this stage since 1871, up to which date it had been given 139 times, its first performance having taken place in the year 1809. The revival was marked by the restoration of several scenes which had formerly been omitted, and in particular the scene between Philip and the Grand Inquisitor, which produced a great sensation. The acting was not of great excellence. Herr Robert's Posa was, perhaps, the most satisfactory performance. Herr Kraschel's Don Carlos was too uniformly vehement. Frau Janisch was graceful and dignified as the Queen, but the Eboli of Frau Wolter was conceived too much in the spirit of the modern French drama. The late Lord Lytton's *House of Darnley* has lasted longer than we expected, and was played for the eighth time on the 13th of February.

At the Stadt-theater, the only real novelty of the month was a two-act comedy by Herr M. Brée, entitled *Zwischen zwei Stühlen* (Between Two Chairs). The two chairs are occupied by two sisters, one of whom is a merry girl, while the other is sentimental; and a young doctor, enamoured of them both, takes so long in making up his mind to which of them he shall propose that he loses them both in the end. The piece contains several effective situations, but the dialogue is poor. Fräulein Schratt was not well suited to the part of the merry girl, but the sentimental sister found a good representative in Frau Albrecht. The novelty was followed by a farcical comedy from the French of Messrs. Granger and Bernard, entitled *Thun Sie mir den Gefallen*, the leading idea of which somewhat resembles that of the *Mari d'Ida* recently given at the same house. The Stadtheater has added to its repertory Gutzkow's *Zopf und Schwert*, a comedy in which one of the central figures is Frederick William I. of Prussia, who has recently been seen on the same stage in tragic guise in Herr Laube's *Prinz Friedrich*, which we noticed last month. Gutzkow's comedy was well received, Herr Lobe being an effective representative of the King, and other parts being well filled by Fräulein Albrecht and Fräulein Weisse, and Herren Tyrolt and Bukovics.

THE Carl Theater has scored a brilliant success by the production of a new opera bouffe, entitled *Boccaccio*, by Herr Franz Suppé, whose *Fatinitza* attained such a reputation that it is about to be produced in Paris, and has already been seen at the London Alhambra. The book of the new opera, which is by Herren Zell and Genée, deals freely with episodes in the life of the author of

the *Decameron*, and is very cleverly arranged for the purposes of the composer. The score contains several striking and original numbers, and it is throughout bright and sparkling, though it lacks unity of style. Fräulein Link made a great hit in the title part, and Fräulein Streitmann sang the heroine's music with tender expression, while the comic parts lost nothing in the competent hands of Herren Tewele and Blasel. Opera bouffe flourishes also at the Theater an der Wein, where Offenbach's *Madame Favart* was successfully produced on the 7th February, under the personal direction of the composer. The occasion was marked by the first appearance in conjunction of two singers prominent in this kind of work, Frau Geistinger and Fräulein Meyerhoff, who respectively appeared in the title part, and in that of *Susanne*. At one of the minor theatres, Messrs. Jarret & Palmer's company, which appeared in London last autumn, have been playing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with considerable success.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IN Milan the opera season at La Scala, which opened so brilliantly, was clouded for a time by some unfortunate performances, but prosperity returned with a very fine performance of M. Massenet's *Roi de Lahore*, conducted by the composer himself, who was enthusiastically applauded. At the Manzoni Theatre the Bellotti-Bon Company, No. 1, continue their dramatic season with fair success. Their repertory has been mainly composed of works well known to Milan, such as M. Sardou's *Dora* and *Ferréol*, M. Dumas's *L'Etrangère*, M. Hennequin's *Bébé* and *Les Dominos Roses*, Signor Cossa's *Messalina* and *I Borgia*, Signor Giacosa's *Partita a Scacchi* and *Il Trionfo d'amore*, Signor Paolo Ferrari's *Due Dame*, &c. In *I Borgia* this company were considered very inferior to the Morelli company, who were the first to introduce Signor Cossa's latest tragedy to the Milanese, but in *Dora* and *Due Dame* they are surpassed by no Italian troupe. Signora Marini maintains her popularity, though she has acquired certain mannerisms of delivery and gesture, and an unfortunate tendency to address the audience, which offend the critical. Signor Novelli has developed into an excellent character-actor, and his rare skill in changing his appearance helps him to assume the most dissimilar parts with equal success. Signor Reinach has at his command great powers of passionate expression, but is too often tempted into excesses. Signora Boetti, with her incisive delivery, and Signorina Pavoni, a charming *ingénue*, are amongst the other shining lights of this company, which is well managed by Signor Luigi Bellotti-Bon, on whose histrionic powers age is unhappily beginning to tell. In the novelties which he produced during the past month French and Italian dramatic works are both represented, the former, indeed, doubly, inasmuch as the new Italian comedy of Signor Castelnovo, *La Prima Bugia* suggests lively reminiscences of Barrière's *Feu au Couvent*. It is, however, a piece of very sound morality, and is written in choice Italian; its main defect is that a plot sufficient for a two-act play has been expanded into four long acts. Signorina Pavoni and Signor

Novelli were provided with good parts, and the novelty met with a moderately favourable reception. Signor Garzes was good in a minor part, but was charged with the offence of "gagging," which in the theatrical slang of Italy is called *commetere dei pistolotti*. The other novelty was *L'Etù ingrata*, an Italian version of M. Pailleron's Gymnase comedy, *L'Age ingrat*, which was admirably played by Signore Marini and Boetti, and Signori Garzes, Novelli, Vitaliani and Reinach, and was well received by the public, though some of the critics attacked its lack of originality, failing to appreciate the freshness with which M. Pailleron has treated an old theme. The opera season at the Dal Verme Theatre continues to attract good audiences. Ricci's *Ohi dura vince* was followed by such works as the *Menestrello* of De Ferrari, the *Monetari Falsi* of Lauro Rossi, *Le Educande di Sorrento* of Usiglio, &c., but the principal attraction was Rota's fine *ballet d'action*, entitled *Carlo il Guastatore*. A new opera by Signor San Fiorenzo, entitled *Il Taumaturgo*, gained applause in spite of a wretched libretto and many signs of plagiarism. At the Canobbiana ballet prevails; at the Carcano, the great *buffo*, Signor Bottero has been drawing large houses in *Don Bucefalo* and other pieces of his repertory; at the Fossati, melodramas by M. Dennerly are well interpreted by the sisters Vestri and a good company; and the Teatro Milanese continues to produce short pieces in the Milanese dialect with varying success.

IN Rome there is a total lack of dramatic entertainments, but opera is flourishing at the Apollo, where Verdi's *Aida* has attained a success rivalling the memorable triumph of its first production in the Italian capital.

IN MADRID.

THE first piece we have to notice this month does not, like most of those we have recently described, turn upon a breach of the Seventh Commandment. *La Novela del Amor*, a comedy in three acts, by Don Valentin Gomez, produced at the Teatro de Apolo towards the end of January, has in addition to this negative merit many good qualities of a more positive character. The scene is laid in the house of Don Anselmo, a merchant, whose daughter Adela has from infancy been destined to marry her cousin Alberto. The young couple, having been brought up together, have a mild affection for one another, and when the curtain rises they are looking forward to their early union. A young man named Genaro, who had some months before applied to Don Anselmo for a vacant clerkship in his office but been refused for want of the requisite knowledge, comes back, having in the meantime by hard work removed his deficiencies. It is a secret passion for the fair Adela that has stimulated him to such exertions, but when he gains the desired post which brings him within reach of the object of his love, he finds that she is engaged to Alberto, who is a friend of his, and he struggles to subdue his passion. Adela, unconscious of Genaro's feelings towards her, imagines that he and her companion Luisa have a tenderness for one another, and seeks to make a match between them. Meanwhile

Alberto has been engaged in an unworthy intrigue, and Adela, greatly grieved at his infidelity, begins to compare him unfavourably with Genaro, to whom she ultimately transfers her affections with the consent of Alberto, who is touched by the noble self-denial which Genaro displays under very trying circumstances. There is little novelty in the plot, but the situations are occasionally fresh and effective. The dialogue is written in harmonious prose, which is at times rather too high-flown. The piece was well acted throughout, especially by Señorita Contreras, who was a charming Adela, and by Señor Vico, as Genaro. The same house produced, early in February, a new drama in three acts and in verse, by Señor Laserna, entitled *Honor sin honra*, which differs greatly from the simple piece we have just described. A parricide in every-day costume shocked the critics, and even the public.

AMONG the novelties produced at the Teatro Español during January was a Spanish version of Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, by Don José de Campo-Arana, which was favourably received, and in which Señora Mendoza Tenorio successfully essayed the title part without being overwhelmed by the crushing memories of the impersonations of Ristori, Pezzana, and other actresses of great repute who have frequently played the part in Madrid. For the benefit of Señor Calvo, the same house revived the *Haz de Leña* of Don Gaspar Nuñez de Arce, a poetical drama in five acts, originally produced some six years ago. The revival proved so successful that the performance was repeated several times.

IN NEW YORK.

THE new year did not begin here under very happy auspices, but before long the aspect of affairs was brightened by the advent of the last English Comic Opera. Early in February *H.M.S. Pinafore* was produced at the Standard Theatre. Miss Neill has had the most extraordinary success here; nothing else seems to be talked of; other theatres have put it in their bills, and several companies have been organized to proceed with it on a tour through the States. *Les Fourchambaults* has been played at the Broadway Theatre with a very different result, for Mr. Dalziel, the adapter, had robbed it of nearly all its dramatic force in the process of adaptation, and the acting—apart from the Bernaud of Mr. Wheelock, and the Mdle. Letellier of Mrs. Lingard—was of an indifferent description. *Ours* has been revived at Wallack's theatre. Mr. Wallack appeared as Hugh Chalcol, Mr. Coghlan as Angus, Mr. Liebert as the Colonel, and Miss Gernon as Mary Netley. The Park Theatre has reproduced Mr. Boucicault's version of the *Cricket on the Hearth*, and the *Colleen Bawn* has attracted good audiences to the Grand Opera House.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

IN all probability *Hamlet* will be followed at the Lyceum by the *Lady of Lyons*, with Mr. Irving as Claude, Miss Terry as Pauline, and Mr. Walter Lacey as Damas. Owing, however, to the marked success of the present revival nothing has as yet been decided upon.

Ruy Blas is in rehearsal at the Comédie Française. The Queen will be played by Mdle. Bernhardt, *Ruy Blas* by M. Mounet-Sully, Don Salluste by M. Febvre, and Don César de Bazan by M. Coquelin aîné, and Don Guritan by M. Martel.

MADAME PATTI has had a very successful engagement at the San Carlo, Naples.

MADAME NILSSON has undertaken to appear in Madrid for two months for 90,000 francs. It is rumoured that in Mr. Mapleson's forthcoming season she will sing in *Le Roi de Lahore*. She has not, however, contracted any save the Spanish engagement, her husband, M. Rouzeaud, having purchased a share in an Agence de Change in Paris, and taken up his residence in that city.

MR. READE writes to contradict the report that the late Mr. Ambrose Sherwin was the original of the gaol chaplain in *It is Never too Late to Mend*. Mr. Sherwin was not known to him.

Now that M. Bardoux is out of office many Parisian managers are breathing freely. Two or three months ago, in reply to a memorial as to the sorry state of the drama in the French provinces, he said, "La liberté des théâtres a fait tout le mal, aussi bien à Paris que dans nos départements." This was held to indicate an intention to return to the *régime* of privilege.

MR. IRVING has offered to play in aid of a fund for re-establishing the Birmingham Shakspere Library, lately destroyed by fire.

MRS. LISTON (Miss Maria Simpson) died on the 25th February.

EARLY in January Miss Ada Cavendish returned to San Francisco from Portland, Oregon, where she met with a very favourable reception. She expressed herself as delighted with the trip, and especially extolled the beauties of the Columbia River. She started a day or two afterwards to fill her Eastern engagements, commencing at Detroit. A letter was recently received in San Francisco from Miss Neilson, in which she expressed her great pleasure at the very favourable reception accorded to Miss Cavendish in America, and wishing her every success.

MR. IRVING has a thoughtful article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the Portraits in *Hamlet*.

THE revival at the Comédie Française of *Mithridate* reminds us of an amusing anecdote in connexion with that play. Beaubourg, whose features were singularly immobile, and who thought more of what he had to say than what he ought to do, once played the king. Mdle. Lecouvreur, as Monime, said to him, "Ah ! Seigneur, vous changez de visage." "Let him do it first," exclaimed a *mauvais plaisant* in the parterre.

THE elder Quinault once dined with Crébillon, father Tournemine, and father Brumoy. A dispute arose as to the gender of "amour." Quinault, on the strength of a line in *Mithridate*—

"Profitant d'une amour qui me fut déniée,"

maintained that it was feminine. The reverend fathers quoted excellent authorities in support of the contrary opinion. "Messieurs," the actor at length said, "un peu de complaisance ; passons l'amour en faveur de la Société." The discussion was not continued.

Gretchen is in rehearsal at the Olympic. Mr. Gilbert has made very free with the old legend, and has imparted more human interest to the story than has previously been thrown around it. Faust will be played by Mr. Conway, Mephistophiles by Mr. Archer, and Marguerite by Miss Marion Terry.

M. GOUNOD has shut himself up at Antibes to proceed with his new opera.

MISS MINNIE HAWK has again made Mr. Mapleson and the public aware of her familiarity with the methods of great artists. At Chicago on the 14th of January she was announced to appear as the Cherubino of *Le Nozze di Figaro* ; some little discomfort or unsatisfied dressing-room caprice caused her to abandon the theatre, the public, and the opera to their fate, but after getting back to her hotel she appears to have thought it would be wise to return and resume her rôle in the closing acts of the opera. It might be asked if Miss Hawk is beginning to realize the exact space she occupies on the lyric stage.

MR. BYRON will have it that the greatest friend of education is the freeknower.

MADAME ROSE HERSEE, accompanied by her husband, Mr. Arthur Howell, has sailed for Melbourne, where she is engaged as *prima donna* of the Melbourne Opera Company for twelve months.

M. VICTOR HUGO's little granddaughter—the Little Jeanne of *L'Année Terrible* and *L'Art d'Etre Grandpère*—lately set her dress on fire, and might have been burnt to death if she had not had the presence of mind to throw herself on the floor, roll over, and so extinguish the flames.

AT Easter the place of *Our Boys* will be taken by another comedy from Mr. Byron's pen.

"WHAT do you think of the Geneva award?" asked a reporter of a slightly inebriated Member of Congress. "Think of her? Never saw

her." "Saw whom? I'm talking about the Geneva award." "So am I. Geneva Ward, old fellow—going to see her at National." "I'm asking you about the Ge-ne-va A-ward," shouted the pen-driver. "Don't you understand?" "My friend," said the obfuscated Solon, solemnly, "you've been drinking. Better go home and sleep-er off—sleeperoff, old fel, sleeperoff!"

MDLLE. BEATRICE was successful in her profession from the pecuniary as well as the artistic point of view. Her property amounted to about £15,000, the bulk of which she bequeathed to Mr. Frank Harvey, her stage-manager, to whom she was to be married.

It is in contemplation to give a complimentary benefit to Mr. F. B. Chatterton, for whom much sympathy is felt. Messrs. Gatti have offered Covent Garden Theatre for the purpose of the intended benefit, and a meeting for the appointment of a committee to make the necessary arrangements has been held.

MANY will be sorry to hear that Mr. Marston is in necessitous circumstances. He is now 75 years of age, and Mrs. Marston, who was herself an actress of repute, and one or two of his family, are unfortunately dependent upon him. In the years when Mr. Phelps revived and maintained the Shaksperian drama at Sadler's Wells Mr. and Mrs. Marston were among his chief supporters. Mr. Marston is now an applicant for the annuity of £40 in the gift of the Freemasons. The election of recipients of the gift occurs in May next.

L'Assommoir continues to fill the Ambigu, and the prices have been raised. During the rehearsal there was something like a squabble between M. Zola and one of the adapters, M. Busnach. "You have 'forced the note,'" angrily declared the novelist. "On the contrary, I have, I think, been wanting in courage," was the reply, "and I'll make no alteration." That such a complaint should have been made by M. Zola is not a little amusing.

MISS ROSE KENNEY, whose performance of Juliet at Drury Lane has justly elicited high praise, wished to make her first appearance on the stage at a small theatre, before an audience of friends, but was induced by M. Regnier to appeal at once to the general public. "*Jetez-la dans l'eau*," the great Frenchman wrote, after hearing her recite two or three scenes; "*elle sait nager, j'en répons*."

DURING the rehearsals of *Les Deux Nabobs*, M. Brasseur insisted upon an endless variety of alterations, to all of which the authors docilely acceded. The last rehearsal but one was held, and the authors, believing that their work was at length done, repaired to the theatre. "Ah!" said M. Brasseur, "I have found a *clou sérieux*—an American actress. You must make a character for her; also an American song." The poor authors obeyed the order, and in a few hours the new part was invented. The lady who played it was Miss Munroe.

INDUSTRY, like virtue, finds its own reward. Miss Munroe wished to

make her first appearance in Paris at the Renaissance ; M. Koning, however, could find nothing for her to do. The actress tried to obtain employment in *L'Assommoir*, *Ladislas Bolski*, *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant*, and *Samuel Bröhl*, but in each case was unsuccessful. The last manager she applied to was M. Brasseur, who at once gave her a part in *Les Deux Nabobs*.

A NEW rival to Miss Kellogg has been found in Mdle. Marie Litta, engaged in the same troupe, who has achieved a marked success in Chicago and St. Louis, so much that the "off" nights give almost as good business as the representations in which the great American *prima donna* appears. They say the latter is already quite jealous ; but this may be but another advertising trick of Mr. Strakosch.

MADAME MODJESKA was playing Juliet at Buffalo the other night, and as she was about to take the potion some irreverent heathen gave an excellent imitation of pulling a cork, followed by gurgling sounds, that convulsed the house with laughter. The lady left the stage in a rage, the curtain was rung down, and only when the offender was ejected would she continue the scene. Malicious critics maintain that the whole affair was an advertisement.

DON PIATT, like many others, was much shocked by the scantiness of some of the costumes worn on the stage in New York. "The women," he says, "appeared in a style of dress—or undress—that our grandmothers would have blushed to use as a nightgown."

NEWS of London actors comes to us by the latest Australian mail, of the date of December 27th. Mr. Wybert Reeve was doing well at Sydney, and was likely to be soon a theatrical lessee. Mr. Emery had concluded a successful engagement at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne ; and Mr. William Creswick, after terminating a prosperous campaign at the Prince of Wales Opera House, had proceeded to Tasmania.

MR. JOHN BILLINGTON, we are requested to state, is not the John Billington who was charged at Marlborough Street Police Court, on the 7th February, with robbery.

THE death is announced of Mr. Henry Naylor, actor and prompter at the Vaudeville Theatre, who, in the course of the last thirty years, has filled responsible positions at Drury Lane and Sadler's Wells. He was the son of Mrs. Naylor, long associated with the old Adelphi in the days of Mathews and Yates, and after joining the once-famous troop of Deulin, Boleno, and Simon, became a recognised pantomimist, a favourite pantaloon, and occasionally acted what is technically called "second" old men. He preserved on the very smallest salary a respectable position. Mr. Henry Naylor, as he was always deferentially called, even by his most intimate associates, died in his sixty-first year.

PLAYBILLS used to contain an outline of the objects for which the play was written. For instance, a programme of the *Gamester*, at Manchester, at the close of 1700, read as follows:—"This celebrated Tragedy is an

honest attack upon one of the most pernicious vices that Mankind in general, and this Nation in particular, is subject. To show how Property is transferred from the undesigning Votary of Chance to the vile Betrayer of Confidence and the insidious dark-minded Sharper, was an undertaking worthy of the Pen of the ingenious Author."

THE *Musical World* says, that two young ladies, desirous of serenading their father on the morning of his birthday, selected an air from his favourite opera, the opening words being "*Fort mit dir, du Ungeheure*" ("Away from here, thou monster!"). The old gentleman felt very much flattered.

Two printer's errors occurred in our last issue. In Mr. Dutton Cook's article read "Otway" for "Ottaway." Firenze is not "near" Florence, but Florence itself.

THE other night a young actress entered an omnibus in the Strand to go home. Every seat was occupied; an old gentleman rose. "Pray do not disturb yourself on my account," said the young lady; "I can just as well stand." "Please yourself, Miss," said the brute, "I am going to get out."

MISS JOSEPHS is prevented by an attack of rheumatism from fulfilling her engagement at the Criterion Theatre.

MISS HELEN BARRY (Mrs. A. Rolls) will shortly produce *The Ring of Iron*, a drama by the late Frédéric Soulié, translated by Mr. B. Webster for Madame Beatrice.

THE portrait by Mr. Johnston Forbes Robertson of the late Mr. Phelps is to be engraved by subscription before being hung in the Garrick Club.

THE Theatre Royal, Glasgow, was burned down last month. The proprietor and manager was Mr. William Glover, son of the late Edmund Glover, and nephew of the late Howard Glover, both sons of Mrs. Glover, the once celebrated actress.

MISS LOUISE ROBERTSON plays La Frochard in the *Two Orphans* with such terrible realism that at the Middlesbrough Theatre a week or two ago several persons got up and ordered her to leave off ill-treating the blind girl!

MR. F. FRANKFORT MOORE, the author of the comedy *Moth and Flame*, and other dramatic works, as well as several fictions, has a new novel in the press, *The Mate of the Jessica*.

THE plays of M. Victor Hugo are being translated into English by Mr. Alfred Forman.

SIGNOR BONAMICI's new opera, *Cleopatra*, is in rehearsal at the Fenice, Venice.

A NEW *Barbiere di Seviglia* is promised at the Teatro Rossini, Venice. It is by Sig. Graffigna.

M. CAPOUL has signed a six months' American engagement to sing in *opérette*; he is to receive 210,000 francs.

SIGNOR MARCHETTI has gone to Rome to superintend the rehearsals of his *Don Giovanni d'Austria*.

THE Portuguese Vicomte D'Arneiro, already known for his *Elisire di Giovinezza*, is composing a second opera, *Don Bibas*.

IT is not improbable that Mr. Lester Wallack will go to California this spring.

JOAQUIN MILLER'S new play, *Mexico*, is a drama of Mexican and American life and love. The scene is laid in Mexico in the time of Maximilian.

MR. FECHTER'S farm in Bucks County, Pa., where he has been located for the last three years, when at home, has put him to a loss, and he has decided to give it up.

THE New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children threatens to prosecute Miss Claxton if she does not desist from using a six-months-old baby in the cast of the *Double Marriage*. The artist protested that the child was a perfect pet among the company, and that the \$10 a week allowed for its services were a great benefit to the mother. It is to be feared, however, that the real article will have to give way to a dummy, patented to laugh or cry as the circumstances require.

MR. J. M. MORTIMER, once the prosperous proprietor of the Grand Central Theatre in Philadelphia, but who became a bankrupt a year ago, and who has since resided in New York, was lately found walking aimlessly about the streets with only his slippers on, and asking of the passers by incoherent questions. He is being carefully watched.

MISS MAUD BRANSCOMBE is more successful, it appears, on photographic cards than on the stage, Mr. McWade having dismissed her from his combination in Ohio.

A GERMAN version of the *Age Ingrat*, of M. Pailleron, was announced for production at the Vienna Burgtheater towards the end of February, under the name of *Spätsommer*.

HERR KLAPP'S comedy of *Rosenkranz und Gildenstein* was recently produced at Mayence with brilliant success, and is in rehearsal at Munich, Leipzig, Hamburg, and Brunswick.

A GERMAN version of Verdi's *Traviata* has been produced at the Vienna Court Opera, under the title of *Violetta*, with Frau Schuch-Proska in the title-rôle.

SHAKSPERE'S *Antony and Cleopatra* has been produced with great success at the Mannheim Court Theatre, with Herr Ernst and Frau Rosa Keller in the title-parts.

THE Berlin Victoria Theatre has in preparation a German version of *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant*, of Messrs. Jules Verne and Dennery, with very elaborate scenic accessories.

A FRENCH company in Berlin has been playing M. Sardou's Comedy *La Papillonne*, the original of Mr. Mortimer's *Gay Deceiver*.

Literature.

“ANOTHER TRAGEDY BY SHAKSPERE.”

IN the last decade of the sixteenth century a play called *A Warning to Faire Women* was acted in London by “the Lord Chamberlain’s Servants.” It proved very successful, and in 1599 was printed in black letter as a quarto. The name of the author was never announced. In the somewhat quaint language of the title-page, the plot turned upon “the most tragical and lamentable murther of Master George Sanders, of London, Merchant, nigh Shooter’s Hill; consented unto by his owne Wife, and acted by Mr. Brown, Mrs. Drewry, and Trusty Roger, Agents therein; with their several Ends.” The murder referred to was committed a little more than twenty years previously, and its circumstances are reported by Holinshed. *A Warning for Faire Women* is a long piece in one act, and is made to depend in a large degree upon dumb show. In the prologue we find the following obvious reference to Shakspeare’s *Richard III.*—

How some damn’d tyrant to obtaine a crowne
Stabs, hangs, impoysons, smothers, cutteth throats.

The Ghost in *Hamlet* is presumably glanced at in these lines :—

Then of a filthie whining ghost
Lapt in some fowle sheete, or a leather pilch,
Come skreaming, like a pigge half-stickt,
And cries Vindicta, Revenge, Revenge.

Then the chorus in *Henry V.* is not too respectfully alluded to :—

And then a chorus too comes howling in
And tells us of the worrying of a cat.

Many years ago Mr. Collier remarked that but for the extreme rarity of this tragedy it might before then have been attributed to the author of *Hamlet*. “Its resemblance to Shakspeare’s plays,” he wrote, “is not merely verbal; the speeches of Anne Sanders, the repentant wife, are Shakspearean in a much better sense.” In a letter just sent to the *Athenæum* he goes much further, maintaining that the play is by Shakspeare, or at least one in the authorship of which he was importantly concerned. “The evidence,” Mr. Collier says, “is entirely internal, for, unlike *Arden of Feversham*, there is no tradition on the subject, but, like *Arden of Feversham*, the story is domestic, and relates to the murder of a husband by his wife

nearly twenty years before Shakspeare was a popular writer for the stage. After the murder we have a scene of remorse, reproach, and repentance by the wife in the presence of her paramour and a friend of the name of Drewry; and if the following be not by Shakspeare, I must admit myself strangely mistaken; it could proceed from no other mind and pen:—

DREWRY. See where Master Brown is : in him take comfort
And learn to temper your excessive grief.

ANNE. Ah ! bid me feed on poison and be fat,
Or look upon the basilisk and live,
Or surfeit daily and be still in health,
Or leap into the sea and not be drown'd.
All these are even as possible as this,
That I should be recomforted by him
That is the author of my whole lament.

BROWN. Why, Mistress Anne, I love you dearly ;
And but for your incomparable beauty,
My soul had never dreamt of Sanders' death.
Then give me that which now I do deserve,
Yourself, your love ; and I will be to you
A husband so devote as none more just,
Or more affectionate shall tread this earth.

ANNE. If you can crave it of me with a tongue
That hath not been profan'd with wicked vows,
Or think it in a heart did never harbour
Pretence of murder, or put forth a hand
As not contaminate with shedding blood,
Then will I willingly grant your request,
But, oh ! your hand, your heart, your tongue, and eye
Are all presenters of my misery.

Brown, the murderer, thus invokes the night:—

O sable night ! sit on the eye of heaven,
That it discern not this black deed of darkness.

Compare this with *Macbeth*, Act iii., scene 2 :—

Come seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day.

Again, later in the play, Anne, the guilty wife, thus entreats Mrs. Drewry, an accomplice, not to betray her:—

Now is the hour come
To put your love unto the touch, to try
If it be current, or but counterfeit.

Which is repeated in *Richard III.*, Act iv., scene 2 :—

Now do I play the touch
To try if they be current gold indeed.

In another place the repentant murderer exclaims :—

I gave him fifteen wounds,
Which now be fifteen mouths that do accuse me ;
In every wound there is a bloody tongue,
Which will all speak, &c.

For a repetition of which see *Julius Cæsar*, Act iii., scene 2:—

And put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar, &c.

There can, I think, be no doubt as to the identity of mind and hand in many other parts of the *Warning for Fair Women*. That Shakspeare had a coadjutor, or coadjutors, is true from the inferiority of thought and style; and the discussion between Tragedy and Comedy for superiority is very tame and poor. Shakspeare did not contribute very much to the performance, but the slightest touch of his pen is clearly visible."

Mr. Collier, it seems to us, has failed to make out his case. His own opinion on the subject is certainly not very definite. The contention with which he starts—namely, that the play is by Shakspeare, or at least one in the authorship of which he was importantly concerned—is scarcely consistent with the admission at the close of the letter, that the poet "did not contribute much to the performance." However, let us endeavour to solve the question by means of internal and other evidence. The structure and general character of *A Warning for Faire Women* do not favour the idea that the play was by Shakspeare alone. In neither respect does it rise far above mediocrity. Mr. Collier may regard it as a play hastily written to supply a temporary need, but here he would be met by the well-attested fact that Shakspeare's greatest plays were thrown off *currente calamo*. The discussion, in fact, narrows itself to the point whether Shakspeare had a hand in the *Warning for Faire Women*, and this point can hardly remain in dispute after it is carefully examined. Impressive as is the scene between Mistress Anne and her paramour, there is really nothing in it to justify the assumption that it was from the same pen as *Lear* and *Macbeth*, and the coincidences of thought and expression pointed out by Mr. Collier may be accounted for on the hypothesis that, consciously or unconsciously, Shakspeare and the author of a *Warning for Faire Women* borrowed illustrations from each other. The play we are dealing with, as has been said, was printed in 1599; *Richard III.* seems to have appeared in 1594, *Julius Cæsar* in 1600, and *Macbeth* in 1606. Lastly, it is by no means probable that Shakspeare was concerned in the authorship of a piece in which the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the chorus in *Henry V.* are held up to ridicule, and we look in vain through his *théâtre* for any disposition to put before an audience so common-place a story as that of the murder of Master Savage Sanders.

there is provided a guarantee that the money is spent upon a thoroughly useful and representative institution. It will not be enough that the principle should be supported by clerical dignitaries like Canon Farrar and the Bishops of Durham and Manchester. Support of this nature will be valuable enough as a defence of the subsidy against those who would be sure to attack it on moral grounds; it will not suffice to convince hard-headed members of Parliament and stingy Chancellors of the Exchequer that this expenditure of public money is expedient in itself or is likely to achieve the purpose for which it is asked. To succeed in this Lord Townshend and Mr. Baillie Cochrane will have to enlist on their side those who by their active share in theatrical enterprises have done most towards the ultimate object which the national theatre will have in view. We must therefore wait to see how the theatrical profession itself takes up the matter at the Willis's Rooms meeting before we can form any judgment of the probable outcome of the agitation under its present auspices. As Mr. Edward Terry sensibly remarked at Covent Garden, "it would be a great mistake to do anything in the matter in a hurry;" but we may add that no amount of leisure in the movements of the well-meaning enthusiasts will compensate for their present want of weight and power.

Although, however, a tempting subject for easy ridicule is not unnaturally afforded by certain phases of this preliminary discussion, we would not be thought to disbelieve altogether in its possible usefulness, or to laugh away its claim to consideration. All we wish is to guard against the assumption that a National Theatre can be established with any reasonable hope of public support by those who have hitherto failed to distinguish themselves by their services to the artistic cause which they advocate. Everything must depend upon the impression which the proposed Committee of Direction is able to make upon those whose duty it will be to inquire into the practical promise of the undertaking. The establishment of a theatre before asking for a subsidy will doubtless be a wise step, and it is satisfactory to hear that several noblemen and gentlemen are willing to come forward with contributions towards a guarantee fund of £20,000. But noblemen and gentlemen have before now contributed their thousands of pounds towards the maintenance of theatres which have, nevertheless, failed to command or deserve the support of the public. What we shall require to ascertain before asking that a national permanence is given to the undertaking is, that the best of our actors and actresses and managers are enlisted in its cause either for an active share in its proceedings or for scarcely less valuable countenance

and support. We do not wish to underrate the good intentions of the professional and non-professional people who supported the Marquis Townshend on the 4th March, but they themselves would probably be the first to admit that they do not adequately represent that higher development and that vigorous revival of our drama which they are so anxious to forward. At present their efforts are merely tentative, and as such are worthy of all commendation; but before they go further they must, if they wish to be acquitted of the charge of presumption, attract to themselves that influential and really representative support which they would have done well to secure in the first instance.

THE OPERA SEASON.

THE influence of the Opera on the musical tastes of a nation is so great that we need offer no apology for directing attention to the manner in which this class of entertainment has been produced here during the last two or three years. The Italian lyric drama is usually regarded as one of the most popular institutions of the country. No capital except London can boast that by means of the opera it supports two theatres for a quarter of the year without assistance from the State. It is not too much to assert, however, that the stability of the institution will be brought to a crucial test if the policy recently pursued by the managers is not materially altered. In more than one direction a parsimonious spirit is shown where parsimony is the least defensible. The necessity of vocal and instrumental efficiency is not practically recognised. Important parts are assigned to "promising" singers—in other words, to singers who have yet much to learn and unlearn, and who for that reason are content to accept engagements for a term of years at very moderate salaries. The stage bands, too, are not happily constituted; indeed, the tones they produce at times seem directly calculated to drive any sensitive lover of music from the theatre. Lastly, owing to the haste in which operas are brought out and the frequency with which the programme is changed, the rehearsals are few and incomplete, and the fact that all the same choristers appear night after night shows that the salary-list is made as short as possible. The question will naturally be asked, Why is such parsimony practised? The manager has a stereotyped answer to make. His expenses have increased to an appalling extent. The *prime donne* now exact terms never previously heard of. Madame Patti and Madame Nilsson each require more than two hundred pounds for every

performance. Moreover, the public look for spectacular effect, which involves a considerable outlay. Managers are accordingly obliged to economize where they can, and so vocal and instrumental efficiency must suffer. No person who is acquainted with the conditions under which an opera is produced will be misled by this fallacious reasoning, and it may safely be predicted that unless the shortcomings we have noticed are promptly redeemed the support hitherto accorded to the Italian opera will appreciably decrease.

The season at the Royal Italian Opera will probably prove more remunerative than its predecessor. Madame Patti is re-engaged, and in the course of a few weeks will appear in at least one new character. M. Massenet's *Roi de Lahore*, brought out at the Paris Opera about two years ago, is at present set down for her, and those who have seen the piece can hardly doubt that as Sita she will add another to her long list of triumphs. In the event of the *Roi de Lahore* not being produced, a by no means remote contingency, she will undertake the part of Selika in *Africaine*. Last summer Madame Patti intimated her intention to impersonate the gipsy in *Carmen*, but on second thoughts came to the conclusion that the absence of cantabile music from the character was not counterbalanced by its dramatic effectiveness. M. Gounod's *Polyeucte* will not be produced, not only because it has not attracted much attention in Paris, but because it partakes of the character of an oratorio or sacred drama. On the other hand, it is more than likely that the list will include the Marquis d'Ivry's *Amants de Vérone*, with Mdlle. Heilbron and M. Capoul in their original rôles, and in place of Goldmark's noisy *Queen of Sheba* we shall have M. Paladilhe's *Suzanne*. There is but too much reason to fear that Mdlle. Albani will not be able to sing this season, but in the contrary case we may expect to hear her in M. Hérold's delightful *Pré aux Clercs*, a work too long absent from the London stage. And here ends the list of the novelties which Mr. Ernest Gye thinks of producing. It remains to be added that his company is as strong as it ever was. In addition to artists already mentioned, Signor Gayarré, Mdlle. Thalberg, Signor Nicolini, Madame Cepeda, Signor Bolis, Madame Belocca, Signor Graziani, and Madame Scalchi are re-engaged. Among the newcomers are Mdlle. Heilbronn, whose *Juliet* is a performance of high merit, M. Lassalle, of the Paris Opéra, Mdlle. Valleria of Her Majesty's Theatre, Signor Gailhard, the great bass, and Mdlle. Rosine Bloch. For the character of Suzanne in M. Paladilhe's opera we shall have Mdlle. Turolla, of whom report speaks highly. Many incapable singers are conspicuous by their absence, and this fact encourages the belief that, as far as the Royal Italian Opera is

concerned, the management of opera in London will be materially improved.

Mr. Mapleson being in America, the arrangements for the forthcoming season at Her Majesty's Theatre, which begins early in May, are not yet finally made. It may be stated, however, that the company will differ in no important respect from that which he directed last year. It includes Madame Nilsson, M. Faure, Madame Gerster, Miss Minnie Hauk, Madame Marie Rose, Signor Campanani, and Madame Trebelli. Mr. Santley is being urged to add his name to these, but has not yet replied. Madame Nilsson, it is expected, will undertake in the course of the season the characters of Aïda and Armida, supported in the former by M. Faure, Madame Trebelli, and Signor Campanini. The artists who ranged themselves under Mr. Mapleson's banner in America seem to have improved by further change of audience, and Madame Gerster, who has risen superior to many of the defects noticeable in her singing and acting two years ago, will reappear with all the *éclat* which a marked success in the United States cannot fail to confer. Mdlle. Vanzandt and Mdlle. Drog have been engaged,—unquestionably a wise step, seeing that for some time past report has spoken highly of their talents. Altogether it is probable that when Mr. Mapleson's prospectus is issued it will be found he has again proved a formidable rival to the manager of the Royal Italian Opera.

DRAMATIC CRITICISM IN THE PROVINCES.

ONE of the most curious experiences of the actor is provided when, on migrating from town to country, or *vice versâ*, he first notes the difference between the criticism bestowed upon him in the London journals and the criticism—save the mark!—which his performances receive in the provincial press. Let the faults and mistakes of the London dramatic critics be what they may—and we found it advisable in a recent issue to enumerate the chief of them—let it be admitted that there are not wanting frequent signs of hasty or perfunctory labour, and let it be candidly confessed that the system of writing duplicate notices, like that of combining the professions of playwright and critic, is a subject for grave regret, it will still remain true that the work as a whole bears evidence of being performed by writers at once capable and honest. The London critic is not only a constant playgoer and a ready journalist, he is a cultivated man who has studied the drama either for love of it or in order to fit himself for his position; he has ample experience of acted plays and of players, and he has a social position

and a reputation to maintain which forbid him, if only from motives of self-interest, to accept the bribes which, if we may believe what we hear, are freely offered and taken in the dramatic world on the other side of the Atlantic. We do not hear of supper-parties given to our critics by popular and beautiful actresses, whose gratitude for kindly preliminary puffs is obviously nothing more than the hope of kindly comment to come ; nor do the fair artistes who in New York or San Francisco bestow jewelry wholesale upon their journalist admirers find any similar calls made upon their purses when they are acting in London.

Although, however, the dramatic criticism of our provincial press differs very widely from that of the metropolis, and differs entirely for the worse, it is not of venality that it can be accused. Its fault is, not that its favourable opinion can be bought, but that it is for the most part simply incapable of forming any opinion worthy of the name. Thus, where the country critics do not confine themselves to empty platitudes, which when they are analysed are discovered to mean nothing at all, they proclaim every timid native *débutante* a second Mrs. Siddons, every local favourite a comedian of the very highest rank, every new play written by a fellow townsman a piece certain to make its mark through the length and breadth of the land. They are nothing, these provincial commentators, if they are not enthusiastic, for enthusiasm pays better than anything else if one can only gush at so much per line. The enthusiasm, too, is for the most part honest and really irrepressible, for after a hard day's work in the police-court, or a series of evenings spent in a Promethean search for fire, a visit to the play, no matter what may be the artistic merit of the performance, is such a relief that it is sure to be relished as a treat. After the sordid dullness of the occupation of the penny-a-lining reporter the most tawdry glitter of a stage-scene lit by foot-lights "to him is opening Paradise." That he has no means at his command for discriminating between false art and true does not matter. That his notion of a comedy is a piece which makes him laugh, and that a tragedy is in his eyes a gloomy work in five acts, to be delivered in the gloomy sing-song of the unnatural "elocutionist," is of the smallest consequence. He cannot express himself in decent English ; he ties himself into a hopeless knot the moment he travels beyond the information afforded to him by his playbill, and his utterances whenever he strives to be original, either in airy banter or in judicial gravity, are of a kind to make the cynic laugh and the lover of the drama weep. Let it not for a moment be supposed that we would blame him for his shortcomings of matter and of style ; as fair would it be to condemn the house-painter who is suddenly

called upon to paint a landscape for his faulty perspective and his coarse use of colour. The error is that of the employer, who would not dream of letting his office-boy manipulate his ledger, but thinks nothing of ordering one of his reporters to do the Shaksperian revival at the Royal Mudborough Theatre, or to knock off a critical account of a new Robertsonian comedy.

And how comes it, we may not unnaturally ask, that such a blunder is committed by the provincial editor, who is in most things sufficiently clever to avoid allowing his modest efforts to become a laughing-stock? How comes it to pass that it is possible for one of the most entertaining collections of newspaper paragraphs to consist of extracts from provincial notices selected and retained by one of our well-known players? Since the recent revival of intelligent interest in theatrical doings and in dramatic art, surely it would be found remunerative to provide dramatic criticism of a kind superior to any which can be "turned out" to order by the man-of-all-work of the establishment, whose literary powers recall the reply of Mr. Oxenford, when he was asked about the capacity for dramatic criticism of a journalist just promoted to a post for which he was generally supposed incompetent. "I don't know much about him," said the veteran, "but I believe he is a very good man at a launch." These gentlemen are very good at launches, at coroner's inquests, at local flower-shows, and at the chronicling of small-beer generally; but why should they be asked to commit themselves over Shakspeare and the musical glasses?

The reason which first suggests itself is the parsimony of the newspaper proprietor, and this may doubtless have much to do with the state of affairs in question. But inasmuch as the typical newspaper proprietor of the provinces can be liberal enough where—as in obtaining news, both local and foreign—he thinks liberality will be remunerative, a great deal must be set down to his ignorance of the fact that it really is worth while to secure for dramatic criticism writers of some little culture and taste. He does not consider his occasional dramatic column worthy of the work of an expert trained for a special vocation, though he likes his cricket-reports to be done by a man who knows something of the game. How great is his mistake is, perhaps, best shown by a reference to the country papers which are conducted by men who recognise the important consideration now given by newspaper-readers to the criticism of acted plays and of players. Where any attempt is made to deal with the subject of the drama, or, indeed, to give art criticism of any kind, it is in the best and highest interest of journalism that the work should be worthily executed.



THE THEATRE NO. 9 NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE

*Yours Sincerely
Arlene Hills*

Portraits.

XVII.—MISS NEILSON.

IT was in the ancient city of Saragossa—interesting alike from its historical associations, the architectural beauty of many of its buildings, and the wealth of olive-groves and vineyards which surround it—that Lilian Adelaide Neilson first saw the light. Her father was a Spanish artist, her mother an Englishwoman of gentle birth. The scenes amidst which her early life was passed were directly calculated to stir her imagination. During the greater part of that period her parents resided in Italy, the picturesque haunt of art and song and romance. Now she was contemplating all that remained of the former majesty of Rome, now lingering on spots connected by local tradition with the memory of Petrarch, now standing before the sarcophagus which is believed to have enclosed the ashes of the ill-fated daughter of the Capulets. In the result a passion for poetry in any form took possession of the girl's mind, and at the age of thirteen—an age at which girls born in those sunny climes are almost women—her acquaintance with English and Italian literature was by no means inconsiderable. And now we come to the principal turning-point in her career. During a visit to Paris she saw *Phèdre* played at the Théâtre Français. The performance made a deep impression on her mind; the profession of the player presented itself to her in its most alluring colours, and she resolved to seek fame on the stage. In 1865, being then in her fifteenth year, she appeared at the Margate Theatre as Julia in *The Hunchback*. The event seems to have attracted notice, as a few weeks later we find her representing Juliet at the Royalty. Immature as the performance was, it displayed Italian-like warmth and depth of feeling, and Lady Becher (Miss O'Neill) joined many others in congratulating the youthful *debutante*. Miss Neilson was not deceived by these compliments into a belief that she had little to learn. Every chance she had of enlarging her experience of the stage was eagerly taken, and such chances were given to her by the production at the Princess's of the *Huguenot Captain* and *Lost in London*, at the Lyceum of *Life for Life*, at the Gaiety of *A Life Chase* and *Uncle Dick's Darling*, and at Drury Lane of *Amy Robsart* and *Rebecca*. In the intervals of these engagements she went about the country. The rapidity of her progress was demonstrated in a series of performances which she gave at the Queen's Theatre. "Miss Neilson's Juliet," said the *Athenæum*, "is now a ripe and sustained performance, characterised in the early scenes

by tenderness and grace, and ascending towards the close to a tragic elevation and fire that seem less art than inspiration. The last waning faults of self-consciousness removed, there will be nothing to say against this fine interpretation." In the autumn of 1872 Miss Neilson proceeded to America, and there, as in Canada, was received with the utmost warmth. In the course of this tour she added to her repertoire the characters of Beatrice, Rosalind, and Isabella in *Measure for Measure*. At Boston, Mr. Longfellow went to see her Juliet. "I thank you," he wrote to her, "for your beautiful interpretation of this enchanting character. I have never in my life seen intellectual and poetical feeling more exquisitely combined." But it was not until she took her first farewell of New York that the full extent of her success was made apparent. "The aspect of the theatre," said the *Tribune*, "was scarcely less mournful than brilliant. Since the night when Dickens, with slow step and sad face, made his last exit from the stage of Steinway Hall, there has been no theatrical occasion in this city at once so animated with chivalry and touching with sense of sorrow and loss." Returning to London, Miss Neilson appeared at the Haymarket in 1876 as Juliet, Rosalind, Anne Boleyn, and Isabella, and was not less well received than before. Her engagement concluded, she went back to America, where her popularity continued to increase. The story goes that the members of the Richmond Legislature, perceiving her in the ladies' gallery, found it impossible to proceed with their business! The critics seem to lose their heads in descanting upon her merits. "The house," says one, "was literally in love with her. There is a fascination about her that is irresistible." This referred to her Viola in *Twelfth Night*, the character in which she reappeared at the Haymarket in the winter of 1877-8. Her performance in the *Crimson Cross* is spoken of in another page. Miss Neilson is undoubtedly one of the most gifted actresses of our time. Occasionally, it is true, she betrays the consciousness of the presence of an audience, and even now has not entirely mastered the art of delivering blank verse. But against these defects we have to set a combination of rare qualities—imaginative power, fire, tenderness, and grace. Notwithstanding the brightness and finish of her Rosalind and Viola, it is with Juliet, we think, that her name is and will continue to be most closely associated. Her southern origin gives her eminent advantages here. The richness of her voice, the depth of expression in her dark eyes, the sensuous grace of her movements, the burning energy of passion which she displays as the tragedy progresses, all this, so necessary in the representation of the beautiful Veronese, could hardly be possessed by one not born and bred under a Spanish or Italian sky.

The Round Table.

“NEW” AND “ORIGINAL” PLAYS.

BY THE CHAIRMAN.

THE first subject to be considered this month is the question involved in the action for libel recently brought against *The Theatre* by Mr. Reece, namely, whether an adaptation of a French play can fairly be described as “new” when its source is not stated. In 1877 a drama by Mr. Reece and Mr. Farnie was brought out in Manchester as “new,” and as “written expressly for Miss Wallis.” Mr. Reece, in reply to some criticism in the *Guardian*, admitted that the piece was “directly founded” upon a French melodrama called *La Mendicante*, and it was partly in consequence of some strictures which appeared in these pages as to the use of the word “new” in such a case that the action was brought. The plaintiff—whom we are glad to see at the “Round Table” this month—frankly stated that if he had drawn up the bills announcing the play he would have avowed his indebtedness to *La Mendicante*, but he called three witnesses—Mr. Tom Taylor, Mr. Palgrave Simpson, and Mr. Hollingshead—to show that it was in accordance with theatrical usage to term an adaptation from the French a “new” play and refrain from mentioning its source. This usage, which from all points of view seems to be indefensible, gave rise some years ago to a very general impression on the Continent that English dramatists, one and all, were unscrupulous plagiarists. That impression has never been eradicated; and no little astonishment perhaps will be excited by the clearness and decision with which the practice of describing unavowed adaptations as “new” plays is about to be reprobated by the principal dramatic authors and a representative dramatic critic of the day.

BY HENRY J. BYRON.

THE announcement of a play as a “new” play would convey to “experts” and people greatly interested in theatrical affairs the notion that the play was *not* “original.” This has been so since I remember the stage personally. I never announced a piece of mine as new *without* the “original,” because I have never translated a play, but I did adapt three French comic operas, and their author’s names were in each case printed on the bills and

published books. I certainly object to the custom of calling a new translation of a foreign play *a new play*. The word new ought to mean something that has not seen the light of publicity before. At the time *new* was always used to translations, original plays were rare. Mr. Bancroft's argument in *The Times* that the public cared very little about whether a play was original or not, so that it amused, was unworthy so able an artist. An author or actor should have *some* pride and pleasure in feeling that his work is *his own*. An actor who represents for the first time a character and succeeds, surely should feel more satisfaction in so doing than in succeeding by closely copying (so *often* the case) the appearance and style of the foreign "creator." We are too apt in our sweeping assertions as to stealing from abroad to ignore the fact of our own plays being often "annexed." *Our Boys* has been played all over the Continent; a friend's son has seen it in Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Holland, Bavaria, and France. The best of it is, that I have not received one penny for this. "Annexing" is not confined to English adaptors.

BY W. S. GILBERT.

THE evidence of the experts should serve to direct public attention to the distinction that is drawn by managers, critics, and dramatic authors between a "new" play and a "new and original" play. It seems that a dramatic author is entitled, by theatrical custom, to translate a French play into English, to produce his translation at a London theatre, and to describe it as a "new play" by himself. The absence of the word "original" in its description will inform managers, actors, and brother authors that the play is a translation; and the only people who will be gulled into the belief that the work is the actual invention of the gentleman who lays claims to its authorship are the public, whose money keeps the theatre going. It seems to me that this custom, if custom it be, should be at once abolished; and dramatic critics can do much, if they please, to put an end to this most discreditable state of things. If the play is original, or practically original, let the author have full credit for such originality as he has shown; if the play is a translation that is put forward as a new work, let the impostor who so advertises it be publicly denounced, and his translation treated as a direct fraud on the public. A play is not "new" because it is newly translated. If I translate Cæsar's *De Bello Gallico*, I have no right to put my work before the public as a "new" account of the invasion of Gaul by the Romans; at best it is but a new translation of a very old history. If a play is translated or adapted from the French, what motive can actuate the author in suppressing the fact, except

a desire that the public shall be deceived into the belief that the work is the outcome of his own dramatic faculty?

By F. C. BURNAND.

"NEW" has a twofold application. A piece, old in England, may be new to America, but it is no less old in America than it is in England. The ancient riddle, "When is a door not a door?" might be, perhaps, heard by Mtessa, the Central African monarch, for the first time. But if Mr. Stanley put it to him, that fair, candid, and honest traveller would be bound, in conscience, to inform Mtessa, that he was not asking him a brand new riddle that he (Stanley) had composed there and then on the spot, but an old riddle, as old as the hills all over the world. And if Mr. Stanley chose to frame it thus (in the African dialect, of course), "When is the portal of a room in a palace not a portal?" he would correctly describe that form of the question as '*a new version of an old riddle*;' but neither in Mtessa's kingdom, nor in any other part of the dark continent of the habitable globe, would it thereby become a new riddle. "New," in the sense of '*something not seen before*,' might be correctly applied to a *new version of an old play* whose original title was retained. Thus I might announce a new tragedy entitled *Hamlet*. Clearly this would not be the old *Hamlet*. Or I might use the story of *Hamlet*, and call it *Ophelia*. I should be within my right in styling this 'my new play,' just as Mr. Wills called his version of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Olivia*, and Mr. Gilbert his version of *Faust*, *Gretchen*. One of the dictionary definitions of 'new' is "different from the former," and, as an example, a quotation is given from the *Book of Common Prayer*, "steadfastly purposing to lead a *new* life." The other dictionary definitions are "not old," which is evident, and "lately produced, made, or had; novel." "New" used *without qualification*, as applied to a novel, a play, or a picture, should, strictly speaking, mean something that has had no being previous to the present production. Yet it would be true to say, in a notice, that 'the new piece by Mr. Burnand, at the Vivarium Theatre, is another adaptation of the well-known old play, by Mr. Samuel Snooks, called *The Wedding Cake*, which was an adaptation of Alphonse Chose's drama of *Les Polissons de Paris*.' In this instance it would be correct to speak of it as "his new play;" or for myself to speak of it as 'my new play,' if I added the description above mentioned, when it would be at once evident that what I meant to convey was that it was a new version of an old piece. "A new play by Mr. Threestars" does not necessarily imply originality as well as novelty. A manager may announce 'a new play' by me, the new

play being an adaptation. But when I announce it *myself*, I should add to "new play" the information that it was an adaptation. I do not see that I am under any moral obligation to do so, *as long as 'new' does not carry with it the meaning of original.*

BY MOY THOMAS.

THE apologists for the practice have certainly not yet adduced any reason which will bear examination by the light of common sense or common honesty. It is, we are told, a very old custom, which is quite true; but we are not considering whether it is old, but whether it is just and right. It is also said that "new" is understood to mean not exactly new, provided nothing is said about the piece being "original." But an adaptor who describes his piece as "new" must either desire to tell or to conceal the truth. If he has no desire to conceal the truth, why should he choose an expression which can only convey the truth when understood to mean the reverse of what it means in the dictionary? And why should he set so much store by the ambiguous expression, as he must be assumed to do, if he angrily protests against the dramatic critics for insisting that he should be more explicit? It is further said that an adaptation may be so clever that the adaptor has really done more for its success than the original author; and this may be true, but in that case he might be expected to be not reluctant, but eager, to invite comparisons. Lastly, it is said that the public do not care who is the author, but only want a good play. *Raison de plus*, as Frenchmen say; for why should the adaptor present himself as the author before audiences who care not a straw to whose pen they are indebted? This may not be a "serious offence," in the ordinary meaning of that expression, but I confess that I think it is time that the practice in question should be treated seriously. The simple truth is, that there is no honest reason why the real state of the case should not be told in plain language. I say in plain language, because the half-confessions and ingeniously misleading acknowledgments of obligations, of which we had some rather flagrant examples of late, are certainly no improvement upon the older system of unscrupulous appropriation.

THE CLAUQUE.

BY J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.

EXAMPLE is better than Precept may be considered an excellent standard proverb still holding its ground, when, in the revolutions of civilisation, so many other once-prized proverbs

have gone "to the wall." We are repeatedly told at the same time by carpers and cavillers against manners and customs at home—those good birds who are perpetually fouling their own nests—that "matters"—the elastic word being applied to almost every conceivable subject—"are much better managed in France." They may be sometimes, I have no doubt; but my nationality as well as my good sense, I hope, grudges and condemns the general application of such a dictum. Indeed, there is one "matter" in which France has set us an example for a long series of years—an example which, to judge from a variety of symptoms coming under my observation of late, we seem inclined to follow at home, and which I, for one, deprecate as "a fair example," and one to be steadily avoided.

I allude to an institution connected with the theatrical world in France, which seemed a very little time ago to have taken such deep and lasting root in the dramatic soil as to render all hopes of its being ever weeded out impossible. This institution is the *Claque*, as is the common generic term for a self-imposed, self-asserting organization of men who undertake to regulate the applause to be bestowed on dramatic productions and their exponents. By these men themselves, or rather by the leaders of this organization, the term *Claqueur* is repudiated as vulgar and objectionable. Their scope and purpose are already defined in the name they proudly assume of *entrepreneurs de succès dramatique*. The result of the supreme sway they have obtained in French and especially in Parisian theatres has proved as disastrous as it is tyrannical. This supremacy was stealthily obtained at first, but it has grown in power and recognised authority until it has been exercised with a rod of iron.

The *Claqueur*, to give him his popular name, was, at the commencement of his connection with theatres, simply a humble volunteer ill-paid, or paid only by a free admission to see the performance, in recompense of his applause bestowed. But gradually the voluntary employment became a regular profession, which prospered to a very lucrative degree. The *Claqueur*, humble and cautious at first, has established himself by degrees as master of things dramatic, master of her stage, master of her manager, the author, and the artist. In return for the arbitrary theories he is supposed to bestow he levies blackmail on managers, authors, actors, and especially actresses, most if not all of whom are bound to pay their tribute to the *Entrepreneur de Succès Dramatique en Chef*. Some of the artists subscribe to him for their applause by the year, others by the month, others for one particular part, others for "that night only." The result, however,

is generally far from satisfactory to any concerned except the salaried applauders. The artists are sure to be more or less distracted because some pet effect has not been sufficiently "warmed up," some trait of genius has been overlooked, and, more especially, some rival has been better treated. The Chef, however, is accustomed to the dissatisfaction of his clients. He smiles, shrugs his shoulders, and leaves the theatre with the proud conviction that glory, art, fame, literary merit are all his own—*alli due* to him!

The Government of the *Claque* in all matters theatrical has gradually produced an effect diametrically opposite to that originally intended. It has long since crushed and smothered any expression of real admiration on the part of the public. Men have grown ashamed and afraid of assimilating themselves to the noisy hirelings in the theatre. The true Parisian never applauds.

On the avowed institution of the *Claque* a desultory warfare against the tyrants was for some time kept up by the public; but the *Claque*, whose supremacy became no longer a matter of professional dispute, held itself too high to allow its sceptre to be ravished from it by such vulgar disaffection as the opposition of public opinion. After some bitter struggles the *Claque* triumphed. The field of battle was their own; and, with one notable exception, to be hereafter mentioned, it has remained their own ever since. To this day there are a few rare occasions when the public makes a faint show of fight against its old enemy, and these outbursts are generally confined to the *Odéon* Theatre in Paris, the resort of the sturdy, enthusiastic, and demonstrative young students of the *Quartier Latin*. These petty *émeutes*, however, are regarded with contempt by the *Claque* as poor revolutionary attempts of a herd of low conspirators; and all attempts of these would-be supporters of independent opinion are crushed under the ignominious term, "*Cabale*." The success-contracting system, it is true, does not always save a bad play from its just fate. A rude and displeased public will occasionally venture to hiss dulness, or in a merry mood, utterly "damn" a piece by shouts of ironical applause which drown the systematic efforts of the well-drilled *Claque*. Another mode of self-assertion on the part of the malcontents against the dictatorial sway of the arch enemy has been occasionally adopted. They quit the theatre *en masse*, and leave the victorious *Claque* the inglorious masters of the deserted field of battle. The *Claque* still applauds, as it is bound to do, to empty benches; but the piece is dead! In spite of these little drawbacks to undisturbed sway, the *Claque* maintained its position, not only accepted by playgoers and acknowledged as an authority, but even recognised by law.

Not many years ago, in the law reports of the daily Parisian papers, was published a formal document by which it appeared that a "Success Contractor" (as the plaintiff designated himself) had entered into an engagement with the manager of one of the first theatres in Paris to supply him with a certain number of "successes" for a certain number of pieces, in return for stipulated and duly-ceded advantages. These advantages consisted principally, but by no means exclusively, of a certain number of tickets, given to him *every night*, for his own disposal and profit, of the *whole pit* on first representations, of so many boxes and stalls, and other little pickings too numerous to mention. On his part the dramatic "success contractor" agreed to provide a certain number of "decently-dressed" men to applaud, and also to be present himself, in order to direct the proper bestowal of the stipulated applause; also to attend all the rehearsals of new pieces in order to arrange with the author the special points where the applause was to be forthcoming, and finally to come to the manager's room when required, and consult with him as to which artists, especially the "ladies" were to be particularly supported. This extraordinary contract, so degrading to truth, honour, and art, was accepted in the law courts as a strictly legal document.

Whatever may have been the *status* of the original humble Claqueur, whose attire was probably as dingy as his avocations, and his linen as doubtful as his social position, the "success contractor" *en chef* is now a gentleman who dresses well and keeps his brougham, and when lounging along the boulevards, prime Havannah in mouth, will catch hold of the arm of any dramatic author who may be one of his "clients," the comedy of non-complicity being no longer thought worth the trouble of acting, and talk over with him the presumed effect of his forthcoming new piece. Very frequently his vanity is increased by the fact of the manager placing the manuscript of a new play in his hands for his perusal and judgment previously to its being put upon the stage. On occasions of rehearsals of importance he never quits the theatre; he pulls out his notebook and marks down the strong and weak points, the scenes to be specially fostered, the situations to be emphasized, the passages to be encoored, the exits and entrances to be peculiarly favoured, and the dangerous points to be tenderly nursed. He never scruples to give his advice to manager and author, or to suggest changes, or "cuts;" and he is much affronted if his advice be not taken. When the morning of the great general rehearsal arrives, he summons his forces, surveys them with his opera-glass from some position of "vantage," and arranges his plan of battle for the important evening. He generally disposes a

square battalion in the centre of the pit, flanked by a dozen or more of sharpshooters on either side ; has a *moucheur* or two—(men trained to blow their noses with tact at affecting moments)—particularly well dressed in the stalls ; a *sanglotteur*, an hysterical sobber (generally a female) in the balcony ; a *pâmeuse*, a fashionably attired female, who will faint away, in the strong emotional scenes, in the dress circle ; a few choice noisy spirits in the gallery ; and sometimes an *interlocuteur*, or interrupter, generally attired as a simple rustic, who in exciting melodramas will rise and apostrophise the villain, to the great delight of the audience.

No wonder that the great “success contractor,” the commander of so extensive and complicated a system, of which only partial details have been given above, should have considered himself as an autocrat, before whose sway the whole theatrical world was bound to bow, and as the lord and master of public opinion and public judgment. Of the evils of the system—evils which eventually could only tend to undermine his own throne—he never deigned to think ; and yet these evils were as manifest as they were manifold and extensive. The system, in fact, whilst it compromises the fortunes of the theatre, tends materially to ruin dramatic art by rendering all actors subservient for the applause they seek to a tribe of fellows who make themselves not only the applauding friends of the artist when sufficiently paid, but his dire enemies if not satisfied to the fulness of their greed. It tends to lower dramatic literature by inducing dramatic authors to think less of the excellence of their work than of a “success” depending entirely on the salaried caprice of a herd of illiterate men. Worse than all, it has nearly succeeded in killing the one real friend of the dramatic art—the Public ; and “murdered by the Claque” may be, one day, inscribed on its tomb.

And this is the system, which with the cuckoo cry, “These matters are much better managed in France,” strong efforts have been obviously made lately to foist on the British stage. I have observed the attempt periodically tried for many years past, although after a time it appears to have collapsed ; but the enemy to all true theatrical art has again appeared, and, unfortunately for the cuckoo cry above mentioned, just at the time when a laudably strenuous effort has been made in Paris to crush it. The Théâtre Français, the great leading Parisian theatre, has, at last, resolved to break the chains imposed on it, and has determined to exclude the tyrant Claque from its walls. It is to be surmised that this praiseworthy fight against the monster will be taken up by all the other theatres in the course of Time’s reforms. That the good fight may be fought out is the earnest desire of all true lovers of genuine

dramatic art. But it is sad to see that, exactly at this juncture, fresh efforts should be made in our own country to follow the "bad example."

OF MANNERISM.

BY DUTTON COOK.

ACCORDING to the dictionaries "mannerism" means "sameness of manner," but in the theatre the word is usually understood to relate to such peculiarities, natural or acquired, as may affect the presence, gait, gesture, or speech of the individual player. Of course it is not the actors only that are chargeable with mannerism, but their profession—the art of personation or representation—is supposed to be more prejudiced than any other by confirmed habits of expression, movement, and demeanour. Every man may be said to be more or less *mannered*—to own certain personal ways and traits, which have become inseparable from himself, a portion of his very nature, distinguishing him from his fellows; insomuch that seeing our friend at a distance, long before his features are discernible, we recognise him by his step, his carriage, his general air. When King John and his mother, Queen Elinor, discovered in Philip Faulconbridge's "large composition" some tokens of *Cœur de Lion*—his trick of face and accent of tongue, the king having well examined his parts and pronouncing him "Perfect Richard"—we may be sure that likeness was also to be found in the illegitimate son's manner; that he had inherited the mannerism of his royal sire. Music has its mannerisms. Do not certain graceful cadences or dying falls always proclaim the compositions of Mozart, of Mendelssohn, of Rossini, and the rest? While in pictorial art are there no mannerisms manifest upon the canvas, and at once revealing the hand of Millais, of Leighton, or of Watts?

Acting is so personal and physical a matter that mannerism is inevitable to it. The player is involved in the character he sustains, and invests it with his own peculiarities of aspect and conduct. Now and then an actor may succeed for a time in discarding, as it were, his own individuality, in so changing himself as to escape identification. It was said of the elder Mathews that he possessed the "art of extracting his personal nature from his assumptions," insomuch that "he was always least happy when he had nothing to assume," and that "in a plain straightforward part, where he had only to speak in his own personal character, he was scarcely above mediocrity." Mimetic power of this kind is of

course of very rare occurrence, nor is it likely that it could be exercised in relation to the loftier efforts of the drama. Assuredly the performances of our greatest actors have been marked by a confirmed mannerism. It could hardly be said of them that they extracted their personal nature from their assumptions. We read of Betterton that his voice was low and grumbling, though he could tune it by an "artful climax" so as to enforce attention even from the fops and orange-girls; that his "fat short arms were rarely lifted higher than his stomach; his left hand frequently lodged in his breast, whilst with his right he prepared his speech." Quin's action, we are told, was either forced or languid, his movement ponderous or sluggish; he was prone to long pauses, and to an artificial or cadenced delivery. According to Macklin's spiteful criticism, Garrick's "art in acting consisted in incessantly pawing and hauling about the characters with whom he was concerned in the scene; and when he did not paw or haul the characters about he stalked between them and the audience . . . squeezed his hat, hung forward and stood almost upon one foot, with no part of the other to the ground but the toe of it; his whole action when he made love in tragedy or in comedy, when he was familiar with his friend, when he was in anger, sorrow, rage, consisted in squeezing his hat, thumping his breast, strutting up and down the stage, and pawing the characters that he acted with." Mrs. Crawford described the histrionic method of the Kembles as "all paw and pause." Edmund Kean's acting was abundantly mannered, for all its brilliancy and genius. His alternation of long pause and rapid utterances bordered on the verge of extravagance; his familiarity of speech and abruptness of gesture were often ludicrous in effect. Of a special instance, Hazlitt notes that "the motion was performed and the words uttered in the smallest possible time in which a puppet could be made to mimic or gabble the part." It was Coleridge, I think, who said of Edmund Kean's acting, that it was like reading Shakspeare by flashes of lightning: an equivocal compliment after all, for a more uncomfortable mode of studying a part could not be conceived. Of Macready's mannerisms it is scarcely necessary to speak. He was, as all who recollect him, will readily acknowledge, curiously angular of attitude and stilted of gait; as Mr. Donne, the late Examiner of Plays, has written, he "was unquestionably a man of genius, and as unquestionably, in our judgment, he inoculated his profession with a style of elocution which sets poetry, music, and nature alike at defiance."

There is danger, of course, of the physical conditions under which an actor may labour being classed amongst habits or vices of manner. To some, perhaps, the squint of Talma or the lameness

of Foote seemed liable to critical reproach as mannerisms. John Kemble might possibly have mended his system of pronunciation could he have been convinced of its erroneousness; but his hollow tones and "foggy throat" were certainly beyond his control. Hazlitt remarks upon the set of ingenious persons who, having discovered that Kean was of small size and inharmonious voice, of no very great dignity or elegance of manner, went regularly to the theatre "to confirm themselves in this piece of sagacity." Yet Hazlitt was himself chargeable with similarly defective criticism when he complained of Jones, the popular light comedian, that he was always "the same Mr. Jones, who shows his teeth, and rolls his eyes, and looks like a jackdaw just caught in a snare;" and when he descanted so frequently upon the tall stature of Conway. Probably Mr. Jones could not help rolling his eyes or showing his teeth, or, from the point of view of Hazlitt, looking like a snared jackdaw; if Kean could not add a cubit to his stature, neither could Conway decrease his height. It may be noted, indeed, that Conway, feeling himself personally injured by the observations of the critic, called upon him for an explanation, and obtained from him a disavowal in the following terms: "Some expressions in my view of the English stage relating to Mr. Conway having been construed to imply personal disrespect to that gentleman and to hold him up to ridicule, not as an actor, but as a man, I utterly disclaim any such intention or meaning in the work alluded to; the whole of what is there said being strictly intended to apply to his appearance in certain characters on the stage and to his qualifications or defects as a candidate for theatrical approbation. Signed, W. HAZLITT. May 24, 1818."

How far a performance is injured by peculiarities of manner each spectator must decide for himself. The question is one of degree. Mannerism, then, will always be in the achievements of the players; but theatrical illusion or the public sense of enjoyment is not really or necessarily overturned by this "dram of eale." In any case histrionic art must be accepted with its qualifications, this as a marble statue must convey with it the blue lines and blots in the stone. In comedy mannerism is scarcely felt as a blemish; the tragedians have succeeded in spite of it. The truth is, that the senses of sight and of sound are very open to reconciliation, and accord with the circumstances in which they find themselves. It was said by or for Wilkes that his ugliness only placed him a quarter of an hour behind the handsome, there was such compensation in his promptness and address. In like fashion, the actor, however weighted by manner, other conditions being favourable to him, may secure the good opinion of his patrons. The public may have always something to forgive the players; but forgiveness has rarely

been denied to them. In less than a quarter of an hour Mr. Fechter's English audiences accommodated themselves to his French accent; Mr. Betterton's Hamlet, probably in a very few minutes, constrained the spectators to forgetfulness concerning the actor's age and clumsiness of form and manifold infirmities. And as much may be said without doubt of later representations of Hamlet and of other characters.

UNREHEARSED EFFECTS.

BY ROBERT REECE.

IF Solon's maxim "Call no man happy until he is dead" can be wrenched into application to things theatrical, then author, actor, and manager have some claim to parody the philosopher's sentiment and say, "Call no play successful till the curtain falls." It is conceded that the "life" of a play may begin with its concluding tableau, but its extinction may be equally a matter of fact; so that there is after all no such great violence done to the law-giver's dogma, unless it be rendered by what are known on the stage as "unrehearsed effects," *i.e.*, circumstances altogether unexpected in the action of a drama, slight perhaps in themselves, but potent in exciting either the enthusiasm or derision of an attentive audience, and in bringing about for good or for evil the very reverse of the result anticipated, or possibly deserved.

Of "unrehearsed effects" tending to the success of a play or an actor the instances on record are so few that it would hardly be worth while the devoting two or three pages to their enumeration; but of unexpected effects (outside of defective stage-management), which have led to the prejudice of a stage-work, there are many and amusing records, some half-dozen of which I propose to recite for the entertainment of the readers of *The Theatre*.

Many of the theatre-going public will remember the first performance of Mr. Edmund Falconer's Irish drama *Oonagh* at Her Majesty's Theatre in November, 1866, and a ludicrous "unrehearsed effect" therein, which effectually damned the piece. Some seven or eight characters were standing in a line near the footlights, listening to the somewhat prolix fulminations of Fadarougha, when a stage-cloth (drawn by cords from under the orchestra) was deliberately and silently pulled by unseen hands from the back of the scene towards the unhappy persons in a line, whose heels it of course tripped up, and whose backs it laid on the boards. The house broke into a yell of laughter, which only ceased when the curtain fell upon a hopeless failure.

The unrehearsed effects in Lord Newry's marvellous comedy, *Ecarté*, were remarkable both for number and vigour; and the "happy few" who were privileged to witness what Mr. W. S. Gilbert subsequently described as "probably the very worst piece in the world" are not likely to forget the manageress with a white satin slipper on one foot and a green satin boot on the other; the "unrehearsed effects" produced by her poodle dog; the result on the audience of Mr. Kilpack's song, introduced to revive a beggar woman, who has fainted from fatigue, or Mr. Fourness Rolfe and the "real" raised pie (in the picnic scene), which latter item of misfortune had certainly never been rehearsed. At the Gaiety, some time since, the fate of *Rose Michel*, which had been hovering in the balance during the evening, was decided by a remark of one of the principal actors (Mr. John Ryder) at the close of a very tedious scene—"Come! you have had ample time to explain all." And at the Amphitheatre, Westminster (Astley's), the same gentleman innocently produced another "unrehearsed effect" in *The Mysteries of Audley Court*. On this occasion Luke Marks (Mr. Ryder) had to open a front scene: the carpenters in their hurry "ran on" an exterior and an interior flat, the combination of which set the house in a roar. Unaware of what had occurred, Luke Marks proceeded to enter, and his first words were, "Everything is going wrong!" at which felicitous (or infelicitous) commentary there was a world of laughter.

I was present many years ago at a performance of some cut-throat drama by a certain strolling company who had made Eastbourne their "pitch" for a week. There was a wonderfully good house "considering," and the melodrama had proceeded fairly up to the entrance of an assassin or hired "bravo," who, it turned out, had been too long devoting himself to the pleasures of the tavern bar. The wicked lord approaching the assassin, to whisper his fell designs to him, observed his "creature's" condition, and, combining his speech with a little advice, said:—"Ha! ha! 'tis well! you are the man I sent for!" (*Spoken aside*: Pull yourself together.) THE ASSASSIN (*indignant*). "You be d—d! pull your own self together!" and straightway staggered from the scene, amidst the shouts of the delighted audience.

In another town I was also a witness of an absurd *contretemps*, which ruined one act, and generally prejudiced not only the drama but the luckless persons specially and romantically connected with it. The name of the piece I have forgotten, but there was a "sensation scene," in which the bursting of a dam, reservoir, or sluice afforded the hero a fine opportunity of melodramatic action. The scene (with "real water" effects) was conspicuously built-up

at the back of the stage, and an ingenious arrangement for stemming or absorbing the flood was, I presume, perfected by the front "sliders" being "at the moment of projection" drawn. Imagine the effect produced on an almost hysterical audience, worked up to excitement by sundry heaves of canvas showing the impending catastrophe, when, on the wild exclamation of the hero—"Great Heaven! the flood is on us!"—the highly unromantic squirting of a stopped-up tap was heard, and a tiny stream, barely sufficient to have disturbed the track of an ant, trickled towards the footlights! The derision of the spectators stimulated the hero to rectify the tap, which (probably objecting to the "part") retaliated by directing a tolerably strong jet into the hero's face, who, discomfited and moist, rushed from the stage, leaving the abashed heroine to struggle through the "flood" to the wing, followed by the shouts of the audience,—increased a moment afterwards by the specially unrehearsed effect of the succeeding soliloquy of a mild attorney (or clergyman; I forget which) being interrupted by a brilliant display of the whole system of fountains taking up a wrong "cue," and deluging the stage (sliders closed!) and orchestra. The whole *contretemps* was so ridiculous that the greater portion of the "house" left, exhausted by laughter.

A well-known actor of small parts, named Masterman, having at short notice to double some character with Catesby in *Richard III.*, endeavoured during the tent-scene to "wing" the part; but, as the scene is very dark to allow for the ghost effects, the old gentleman borrowed a candle, and, spectacles on nose, studied up to his cue. The cue being given, oblivious of all save the fact that he had to "go on," Catesby made his appearance at Richard's call, with a lighted candle and spectacles, to the utter destruction of Richard's most effective situation.

Total oblivion of the right words has not unfrequently helped to destroy a scene, but I once had the delight of witnessing an actor's forgetfulness of the text diverted into great glory to himself. A certain gentleman, more distinguished by his potations than his acting, found himself suddenly at a loss for the context of the unusually well-known speech beginning, "There is a tide in the affairs of men," &c. Being gifted, however, with an extraordinary self-possession, to call it by no stronger term, he supplemented the passage in the following manner:—

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,—

(Pause) And, which perhaps—may not occur again!"

The effect on the house may be imagined.

A well-known manager (whose initials only I will give, "W.G."), produced a marvellous *bouleversement* of sense and circumstance on the occasion of a new drama's first representation. He had (by self-election) to play the part of a judge, who, by virtue of his office, was to condemn a criminal to transportation to Botany Bay. On the arraignment of the prisoner, the excellent judge was so far mollified by applications to his favourite tippie that he refused, *coram populo*, to hear anything in the defendant's disfavour, and in spite of prompter and principals, dismissed the case with a judicial blessing; rendering the next act, which shows the hero a convict in Australia, a wild chimæra. Without a personal illustration these few instances (capable of being multiplied, I have no doubt, *ad infinitum*) would be incomplete. I had the misfortune to write the first drama which was played on the opening of a new theatre in London. Whether the piece was good or bad it is not for me to say; but an "unrehearsed effect" ruined it. In the prologue, containing, of course, the very gist of the story, and while Mr. Charles Harcourt was earnestly setting forth the *raison d'être* of all that was to come, a pair of flats were suddenly run on without notice, "pull" or direction, and—the public, being entirely in the dark concerning the motive of the drama—the result was a mystification, and a managerial failure. With this statement against myself, I conclude a list which, as I have said, is hardly commenced; for the details of London, and especially provincial, "unrehearsed effects," should fill a volume.

"SOMETHING TOUCHING MY LORD HAMLET."

BY EDMUND FALCONER.

IT is very probable that many would be disposed to receive any new comment that was conceived in the spirit of, or resembled in expression, a lesson upon the merits of Shakspeare in the light of an insult to their intelligence and an indirect slur upon their patriotism. But I do not purpose either to expatiate upon the admitted excellence of Shakspeare as a dramatic poet, or the peculiar idiosyncrasy he imagined to be revealed or developed in Hamlet. I wish to call attention to a fact very much overlooked or undervalued by many professed lovers and admirers of Shakspeare, who assume that his works can only be fully and properly appreciated in the closet, and who talk of *the student's Hamlet* as some ideality,

very much superior to and distinct from the playgoer's *Hamlet*. The fact I speak of is, that from the date of its production to the present day *Hamlet* has always been the most popular acting play in the language.

In the words of a rhyming chronicler some few years after its first presentation, "*Hamlet* pleased everyone." In Henslowe's diary there is an entry about some moneys "promised, or to be paid to another author for a *version of Hamblet*." This makes it probable that Shakspeare's play had proved a great success at the rival theatre. It is well known to provincial managers and actors that no other stock play is so likely to attract a good house. An examination of the receipt register of one of the largest of our country theatres, conducted in a truly commercial spirit (I refer to the Theatre Royal, Manchester), proved that *Hamlet* had drawn more money than any other play, new or old, performed there in the course of a term of ten years. I have heard the late Mr. W. R. Copeland, for many years the manager of the two principal theatres in Liverpool, say that from his experience he would rather have *Hamlet* played than any other play twice a week all the year round, if he could only present a new actor in the principal character once a month. During Mr. Charles Kean's management of the Princess's, *Hamlet* was the one great popular play that always drew without the aid of new pictorial effects. At the same theatre, with another successful representative, Mr. Fechter, it attracted large audiences for upwards of sixty nights—spread over, however, a period of five months. Within the last decade, performed by Mr. Edwin Booth, in New York, U.S.A., it has twice had a run of a hundred consecutive nights, and during a portion of the second term proved the most attractive play, with Mr. Fechter, in the same city.

Hamlet was not intended by the author to be a psychological problem for the professors of mental philosophy, a dreamy ideality for poetical students, but an instantaneously intelligible transcript of a piece of humanity, a play which should interest, please, excite, and edify, all kinds of audiences, in several ways. In fact, no better *acting* play was ever written or designed. I know what scholastic critics, with their heads full of the unities, will say to this. They will refer to the jagged outline of the story—the piecemeal action by which it is carried on—the apparently hopeless confusion, from lack of premeditated climax, of the last scene, which seems to compel the author to run a-muck upon the principal characters to bring it to an end. They will tell me that when he wrote *Hamlet* he was not master of his art, and in corroboration of this theory will point to others of his plays as examples of compact design. They want

the Grecian temple standing clearly defined upon some olive-wreathed mount or promontory against the cloudless orient sky—not the irregular fortress turreting the base of Elsinore, and majestically looming through the mists from the Baltic. I have many answers for them besides the one just implied; but I prefer to rely upon the proved *fact* that *Hamlet* is a *great acting play*. The grandest, the most vital elements of a great drama are to be found here more than in any other. The more critics seek to prove that the author violated or disregarded all accepted rules in its construction; it lives to be popular without their aid. Not that I believe it was fashioned without reference to rule, or that it does not embody a perfect design of a Titanic play; but to attempt to prove this would in appearance be an attempt to prove my knowledge or conception of Shakspeare's dramatic art superior to that generally possessed by others, and this is foreign to my purpose. I want to call attention to facts that vindicate Shakspeare from an implied charge of being indebted to the politeness of his critics, and of owing much to the intelligence of a student, or the new reading of an actor.

It is common cant to say "that nobody fully understands Hamlet," and an almost equally hackneyed one, "that every man is a Hamlet to himself." This is due to the character being so thoroughly human, so readily understood by everyone, that no one wants any interpreter. The Germans—their scholars and actors—somewhat amusingly assume that they understand Shakspeare, and more particularly what he means to express in *Hamlet*, better than his countrymen. I don't admit it; indeed, it appears to me that Goethe betrays a very coarse misapprehension of what Shakspeare meant us to deduce from the outspoken madness of poor Ophelia. No two men will hold exactly the same opinion as to the character of a mutual friend, be he as outspoken as the day. There is scarcely any man who thinks and acts under a variety of fortunes or of passions who will not say and do things that seem most out of keeping with his general character, though immediately relative to it in a particular phase. So with the discrepancies that appear in the details of one man's reading of *Hamlet* with another's, although both may truly understand the entire humanity of the character as an eloquent exposition of a very lifelike blending of the passions of the body with moral and reflective wisdom, with the finer aspirations of the soul. Here we may see how superior intellectual powers in action serve to regulate and give point to the exchange between the mental confidences to which the spirit is disposed and, the confessions more or less sensuous, and partaking of the weakness and character of the ills to which the flesh is heir. No play was

ever more ostensibly designed and written to be acted, or ever more triumphantly and continuously accomplished the intention of the author, than Shakspeare's *Hamlet*.

STAGE-FRIGHT.

BY WALTER BAYNHAM.

NO, pardon me; not *stagey* fright. I am not going to talk about fright which that most marvellous of contortionists, Fred. Vokes, expresses, nor the fright of knees in kissing proximity, chalked-faced, spiked hair, shivering jaws, clattering heels' fright. I don't allude in any way to that species of fright which the comic man of the last decade expressed by various gulps, ineffectual attempts to swallow, a stammer, and fixed and goggle eyes. My fright has very little connection either with that wonderful realistic terror portrayed by Robson at the discovery of the robbery in Daddy Hardacre, Mr. Irving's powerful picture at sight of the ghost, or even—matchless marvel of art—Jefferson's scared look at the "spectre crew," of which latter an astute provincial critic once observed: "It was not worth seeing twice; for anybody could see such fright as that at any great street-crossing any day in the week. What we wanted to see was *acting*." No! all this fright, although for the most part not *stagey*, is essentially of the stage; but, especially in the three last cases, it is, according to our astute critic's remark, frequently seen off it. These stage-frights are all known to the ordinary playgoer; that which I am thinking about is known but to the player himself. None but a player has felt it. None but a player can describe it, and the strongest pen of the player will weaken in the attempt. I believe I am not far off the mark in saying that there never was or will be an actor of note, great or small, but has felt or will feel, at some time or another, its force, if he has not collapsed under its influence. Without going back to the days of Garrick or Macready, and a host of tragedians who always kept in bed nearly the whole of the day to calm their nerves before acting a new part, I can just call to mind one or two cases confined even but to one theatre, "The Old Adelphi." On the first night of a new piece there the Keeleys were always very ill from fright. Leigh Murray suffered as much from it as a cockney does in the "chops of the Channel." Céleste used to dash on in sheer desperation from it, saying to herself: "Well, dey cannot keel me for it." Alfred Wigan, one of the letter-perfect actors, was a martyr to fright, so much that he occasionally totally forgot the words; as for

his accomplished wife, he was obliged to divert her attention during the day, lest the dread of a first night should overpower her, and at night she, on one occasion, had to throw herself on the ground to subdue the beating of her heart from fright. "Feel my hand," said Charles Kean to me, when he was playing Cardinal Wolsey for the I don't know how many hundredth time in the provinces. It trembled as if he had the ague. Mrs. Stirling would never venture on the stage without the manuscript of her part in her pocket, as a charm to keep the words in her head. Mr. Irving's nervousness is simply indescribable; even Mr. Toole will not be seen by his most intimate friend on a first night; while Mrs. Kendal complains that her "stage-fright" increases every year, and with Mr. John Parry everyone knows it amounted to a positive disease. The malady is too universal for stage-managers not to provide themselves against it in novices. The worst thing possible for any actor to do is to try to gain courage by hauging about the wings till his "call" comes. "Keep in the Green-Room, Sir," says the prompter to the novice. When the "call" comes the novice is somehow hustled on to the stage, and, like a dog thrown for the first time into the water, he sometimes struggles out of his difficulty. Not always! I remember one unfortunate young gentleman who was to make his first appearance in *Richard III.*, as one of the small noblemen who wait on Richmond. We had a very scanty company, and our army on the occasion was represented by One unhappy super, who stood with a banner, and the characteristic "super-shivering legs." The young gentleman had but to say:—

"Your words are fire, my Lord, and warm our men," &c.

He was not *quite* perfect at rehearsal. Night came. The scene drew. "Go on!" shouted the Prompter. On the young gentleman was pushed; his cue was given. All that stage-fright would permit him to think of was *one* word in the speech. That one word was—*Fire*. He looked at the shivering standard-bearer and desperately blurted out—

"If we'd a *fire*, my Lord, we'd warm our *men*."

On one occasion, whilst playing in *Macbeth*, I saw stage-fright seize our Rosse so remorselessly that, all unconscious of the consequences, he took by mistake the chair set apart for the Ghost of Banquo. The apparition, likewise unconscious of the fact, entered, and, without looking behind him, sat down, not in the chair, but on Rosse, who immediately rose, apologised in dumb-show to the Ghost, offered him the chair, and the play proceeded. I once played Faulkland to a young lady, a very nervous novice. Imagine my

astonishment at hearing her say to me, instead of "Nay, then! I see you have taken something ill," "Nay, then, you must have taken something that has *disagreed* with you." This substitution of words for the author's is, perhaps, however, better than the effect stage-fright takes in most instances, that is, of depriving its victim of the power of uttering any words at all. "'Tis in my memory locked," said one of the legion of victimised ones—alluding to the words—to Mr. Odell. "Yes," was the reply, "so I see, and you've forgotten the key." Actors are, however, indebted to fright, and without a certain attendant nervousness no actor has ever been able to throw vigour into a part. Occasionally, stage-fright has, even, by a fluke, been the foundation-stone of an actor's success. It was of *mine*. You don't know me, by-the-by — never heard of me; never mind! It was at Leicester, many years ago; I was not more than twenty, and had to make my first appearance in *Sardanapalus* as Pania, the officer whose speech, it will be remembered, in the memorable banquet-scene rouses the voluptuous monarch to action. No part could possibly be more trying to any actor's nerves. He enters at a time when the stage is in the fullest glare. Everybody connected with the piece and some hundred "extras," all in the most bewildering costumes, are grouped together. It was the first night; the late Mr. Thomas Stuart was the "star." The music seemed to me, even before I went on, perfectly deafening. All that my fancy had pictured at rehearsal faded into thin air before that spectacle at night. I had rehearsed the part for days before, driving the landlady, whose bedroom adjoined mine, to the verge of lunacy by going over and over the words of my part—specially the speech in the banquet-scene—at all hours of the night. At length the scene drew. The tumult that preceded my entrance was heard in the distance. The prompter was there directing the feet of some dozen carpenters up to the climax of stamps. The orchestra—behind the scene—had sounded the march. I heard the words of

Altada. Hark! what was that?

Zames. That? nothing but the jar

Of distant portals shaken by the wind.

[*Increased noise of arms, stamps, trumpets, and distant shouts.*]

Altada. It sounded like the clash of—— hark, again!

Zames. The big rain pattering on the roof.

[*Increased roar of band, feet, and voices.*]

"On with you!" shouted the prompter. On I dashed, my dress smeared with (rose pink) blood, my face tinged with brown ochre, my sword drawn. On I dashed down the gentle declivity, and slid down on one knee with my back to the footlights and facing the scene. To confront an audience is, for a beginner, no joke; but to

confront nothing but actors! Every eye was fixed on me—supers, actors, ballet, and star. I could hear the buzz of the vast audience, though I could not see the faces. On my speech the great scene hung. The tragedy couldn't get on without it. All the responsibility seemed now for the first time suddenly to crowd in as if to crush my very brain. There was a glare everywhere—from the vast Egyptian lamps, from the eyes of every human soul, which seemed filled with fire. Footlights, dresses, candelabras, eyes, the border gas, the jets at the wings, everybody and everything, tables, stools, goblets, mixed themselves up into one heterogeneous, glaring mass, out of which came the braying of trumpets, the shouts of the carpenters, but, above all, the beating of my own heart. My head whirled, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, my brain seemed on fire and appeared to burn up every word I tried to utter. At length I heard myself stammering out my first speech:—

Look to the portals,
And with your best speed to the walls without.
Your arms! to arms! The king's in danger. Monarch!
Excuse this haste—'tis faith.

"Speak on," thundered poor Mr. Thomas Stuart, with that peculiar guttural sound so characteristic to him which always seemed to indicate that he was choking; "Speak on." But he might have commanded for ever, but in vain. The heterogeneous mass seemed seething on my brain. I felt deadly sick. The stage heaved, and I was conscious of everybody shouting, whispering something at me, then of nothing. I believe to this day that I fainted. The words slowly delivered in the dear old Stage Manager's voice:

"It is as Salamenes feared,"

were the first that were distinguishable. They revived me. I finished the scene and staggered off to my dressing room, devoutly to thank Heaven and the "S. M." who had saved the piece, and—my engagement.

It was a fortunate accident for me. The situation and circumstances surrounding it—Pania being supposed to be wounded—everybody thought the faint was stage business, splendidly acted. I rose rapidly from that time. Everybody, Stuart of course included, said, "I was the best Pania on the stage," and in a few years my name—What! not know it: not have heard it? Is it possible? But never mind. Mark me—a *day* WILL come!

Portraits.

XVIII.—MISS CAMERON.

THE history of opéra bouffe in England is far from uninteresting. For some years this peculiar form of entertainment seemed to have taken deep root amongst us. The first piece of its kind brought out in London, *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*, created nothing less than a *furor*, and for a time opéras-bouffe were produced in rapid succession. But about four or five years ago the exotic was deprived of its charm. The majority of the managers, in the heat of competition, courted success by adding attractions of a meretricious character to their importations. They were no longer content to rely exclusively upon a humorous travestie, set off with bright and tuneful music. Therewith opéra-bouffe began to relax the hold it had gained upon the town. The *jeunesse dorée*, it was found, constituted but a small section of the playgoing community. Decried as indelicate, if not indecent, opéra-bouffe fell into disrepute, and has long since ceased to hold a prominent place in the list of London amusements. In all probability it would be beyond resuscitation if it had not been continued in a less offensive form, and if, more particularly, it did not number among its votaries a few players who, like the subject of the present sketch, can act and sing with taste and expression. Miss Violet Cameron is a niece of Miss Lydia Thompson, and has only just completed her eighteenth year. Her first appearance on the stage was as far back as 1870, when she played Karl in *Faust and Marguerite* at the Princess's Theatre. For three consecutive winters she might have been seen in juvenile characters in the Drury Lane pantomime. In 1875, after having fulfilled an engagement at the Adelphi, she became a member of Mr. Henderson's company, and as such played at the Globe, the Criterion Theatre, and the Folly. In the *Cloches de Corneville*, as Germaine, she fairly divided the honours with Miss Munroe. "The belles of Corneville," Mr. Byron is reported to have said, "are these young ladies; they strike one, too." Miss Cameron is now at the Strand Theatre. That she will soon develope capacity for work of a higher order than burlesque we have little doubt. Two or three years ago, in the course of a provincial tour, she played Perdita at Liverpool with much intelligence and effect, and the fact that Mrs. Bancroft and Miss Cavendish won their first laurels in burlesque may encourage her to undertake the hard study without which her natural gifts can never be fully utilized.



THE THEATRE NO. 9 NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE

Sincerely yours
John Cameron

Fenilleton.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF ST. PIERRE.

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

TO those who value the last attentions paid to the dead, William the First's finish will in a measure tarnish the so-called "glory" of his life. The ancient citizens of Caen could neither have loved nor feared him, otherwise it would not have been permitted that his corpse should be challenged at the grave by a humble citizen; he who in war had trampled upon and rended England, and in the days of peace swept a whole county clean of houses and inhabitants to make a hunting-ground near his palace at Winchester. He may, perhaps, have been thought much less of at home than abroad. Normandy proper may have considered his exploits in England of no great account. Agricola, who first circumnavigated this island, and under whose sway the Roman dominion in Britain reached its utmost permanent limit, was not held in high regard by the people. They could not understand that there was anything very wonderful about a man who was one of themselves, and presented to them no special appearance of wisdom and power. Domitian, nevertheless, recalled him from Britain because he was jealous of his renown. It is believed the illustrious Roman was poisoned in consequence. There are many arguments in favour of the happiness and safety of a private station; though, in life, those who are famous will invariably find a wholesome lesson of humility among their neighbours, or in a visit to their people in the town or village where they were brought up. Shakspeare was evidently regarded as an ordinary pleasant, good-natured gossip at Stratford, even after he had returned to the old town well-to-do and famous. Crabbe, who had won the very heart of the nation by his truthful and touching poems, was surprised to find himself famous in London, for he remarked, "in my own village they think nothing of me." Some people living in the next street could not direct me to the house where Le Sage was born. The strangers who come many miles to see the house where Carlyle lives are looked upon as foolish creatures by many of the local inhabitants. In the north, pilgrims in search of the houses

once occupied by Wordsworth and Southey are regarded by not a few of the natives with pitying glances. The old copy-book philosophy that "familiarity breeds contempt" goes straight to the mark. American Presidents would, I suspect, be regarded with much more respect and veneration if it were not for the election campaign which brings them down to the practical level, for the time being, of their politicians. No man is a hero to his valet. Lord Palmerston's agricultural neighbours with whom he chatted about the crops could never quite realize that his very name was a great moving power from one end of the world to the other. How many of the inhabitants of St. John's Wood who were in the habit of meeting the author of *Adam Bede* taking a walk in Regent's Park believed that they were regaled with a sight that thousands of people would have travelled long miles to see? Hardly a group of strangers stand by Oliver Goldsmith's tomb, outside Temple Church, that loiterers thereabouts do not wonder what they can possibly be looking at. It is a sad reflection that those who live in history have often paid the penalty of melancholy endings. I do not profess to touch the heroes and heroines of martyrdom, though in Normandy one might be excused for mentioning Joan of Arc. Beau Brummell died in a lunatic asylum at Caen, and Bouni, the secretary and early friend of Napoleon I., breathed his last in the same institution, l'Hospice du Bon Sauveur. It was from Caen that Charlotte Corday set out to assassinate Marat. In the old days the learned Bishop Huet was born here, and in modern times Auber, the composer, first saw the light in this quiet beautiful city, which had previously inspired the muse of Clement and Malherbe.

THERE is a pretty suburb of Caen called St. Julien. It is a little world of fine houses, and the district has a history. The territory of St. Julien was originally dependent on the fief of Monsenay, and belonged to Bertrand de Rocheville. He had feudal powers like the Norman knights in England. The inhabitants under the shadow of his castle were his slaves. Indeed, all who went to live in the parish of St. Julien were subject to vassalage. It was, therefore, chiefly occupied by families of people in difficulties, men and women who found freedom less comfortable than vassalage. In the eleventh century the Jews settled down at St. Julien, and carried on the business of usury. It must have been that the money-lenders outside the precincts had agents within. They were at their best, in Caen, as a community no doubt after the slave epoch. They were, however, in the old days always under the inspection of a corps of judges exclusively charged with the affairs

of the Israelites and were called the Jews' exchequers. De Bras has an interesting note upon the district: "Where so many fugitives have come to live in order to escape their creditors, are a great many quarries of the whitest stone, soft to work, which on being exposed hardens in such a manner that the injury of the weather, the frost, and the rain cannot harm it." There are not wanting plenty of magnificent testimonials to the truth of the ancient writers' description of Caen stone in many countries. Not far from St. Julien the ancient leprosy hospital of the past had its site. It was founded by Henry II., Duke of Normandy and King of England, in 1161, and the historians of the period speak of it as "wonderful work." There is hardly a darker time to look back upon than this scourge of leprosy in Europe. Introduced as a consequence of the Crusades, Caen was especially smitten.

So contagious and revolting was this disease that it was regarded with superstitious awe, which, coupled with the want of therapeutic physic, contributed to its terrible effects. Leprosy was regarded as incurable. The authorities contented themselves with the isolation of the stricken. By degrees special houses were constructed for them; these came at last to be fixed in distinct localities. There was not a town or village that had not its hospital. In the districts of Douvres and Cruelly, and also at Mathieu, Villois, and Lion, they were to be found. The fears which the pest spread gave rise to more than one drama not less touching in its subject than the story of Xavier de Maistre. When a person was suspected of having taken the disease he was sent before the local tribunals, who at once ordered an inquiry and a search and examination of his house. This was effected by a surgeon, often, strange to say, by lepers themselves, with the invariable result that the suspect was thrown into a house of infection, a veritable hell, condemned to spend there the rest of his miserable days. If the condemned were really not lepers when they entered the pest houses, as must very often have been the case, they soon caught the contagion. The "crime" being thus substantiated the leper was admitted *à la prébende ou pension du Roi*. The lepers became quite a separate people in the land, with their liberties and their franchises. Struck with civil death, denied the right of willing property or inheriting it, they were allowed the temporary use of their possessions during life. The Lazaretto of Henry II., at Caen, was well endowed for the maintenance of all. The king instituted in the interest of this hospital the fair of St. Jude, which is still kept up, and is celebrated on the 28th of October. He gave the lepers large gifts and

properties. Every three years the town of Caen elected administrators of the Lazaretto and appointed a chaplain. In the thirteenth century the establishment was directed by a single officer nominated by the king. He was called the Great Lazaretto (*Grande Maladerie*). It is well ascertained that marriage between lepers was allowed, with hideous results. The Lazaretto was occupied three hundred years ago, but in 1696 it was almost deserted, and soon afterwards, the plague having run its terrible course, the institution was converted into a house of correction for beggars. A hundred years afterwards it became a lunatic asylum, and old men in Caen can remember these pauper maniacs "stretched out on straw and grovelling in filth, many of them fastened by chains to the damp and noisome walls of their cells." It is only a little more than seventy years ago that the amelioration of their condition was effected. "The good old days," as some of us persist in calling the dark ages, furnish incidents of horror as terrible as any that have been invented or imagined for the punishment of the damned. What a history of misery and death is the story of the world's hospitals for lepers and lunatics, and of the condition of European prisons! Reforms of all grievances come sooner or later; but this is no atonement for the sufferings and miseries of delay.

It is difficult to reconcile the barbarism of these past days with the knowledge and taste and wisdom which are displayed in the architecture of the middle ages, unless it is in the hypothesis that mankind is its own active enemy, trammelled by superstition, bound down with the thongs of habit. All great reforms, all wise changes have been opposed, and have only been successful after great conflicts. Frederic the Great of Prussia, in his determination to abolish serfdom, was obstructed not only by the lords of the soil but by the serfs themselves. Their condition was wretched beyond the condition of affairs recently so dramatically illustrated in *The Danicheffs*. They could neither marry nor possess property without the consent of their lords; and yet they feared to be free. Hallam says man has never reasoned for himself, and is the puppet of impulses and prejudices, be they for good or evil. "There are in the usual course of things traditional notions and sentiments, strengthened by repetition and running into habitual trains of thought. Nothing is more difficult, in general, than to make a nation perceive anything as true, or seek its own interests in any manner but as its forefathers have opined and acted. Change in these respects has been, even in Europe, where there is most of flexibility, very gradual; the work not of argument

or instruction, but of exterior circumstances slowly operating through a long lapse of time." Education, nevertheless, has done much in these latter days in shaping the course of Europe, and if a people endowed with such relics of the greatness of their fathers as Caen possesses is apt to lag in the rear of such progress as does not fit the traditions that have been handed down to them, they have a pathetic excuse in the sobering influences of their noble buildings and finished streets.

THE modern "hurry and dissipation of affairs" are shut out from Caen, though it is a far more lively city than Ely or Durham, where you may bury yourself in the shadows of cathedral closes and live the life of a hermit. One could dream away existence in a pleasant consciousness that the world was still going on at Caen. The atmosphere of the place is full of the solemn influences of an historic city without the gloom of sombre cloisters and grass-grown streets. Antiquity lays its hand upon you kindly. It does not grip you with iron fingers, nor is your path strewn with ruins. The daily newspaper of the period links the musty tones of monkish cells with the past, and a current intercourse with the world at large saves one from sinking back into the moral darkness out of which, as by a miracle, spring these glorious images of light, the churches of St. Jean, St. Pierre, and St. Etienne. Once a year we should be stirred up into a wholesome excitement by the fêtes and the races, the oratory of public societies, the eloquence of the local editors in their local papers, the blaze of trumpets, the roll of drums, the flutter of bunting, and the light of variegated lamps and lanterns from Japan. Then the next day would come as it comes to me now. The lanterns are burnt out. The flags have been taken down. The strangers are gone home. Once more there is rest. It is not a large house, I grant you, and perhaps to take life easy here in the bosom of one's transplanted family may not be a high ambition, but just now nothing appears to me so sweet to think upon. It may be that longings to know what is going on in the great city, from the turmoil of which this is so delicious a relief, may shortly set in and induce a new call upon Jean and his omnibus. Meanwhile, however, Caen is a city to rest in and cultivate content.

En Passant.

THE atmosphere of play-land appears to be favourable to longevity. Mr. John Payne Collier, who is in his ninety-first year, is rewriting his *Annals of the Stage*; and one Saturday last month Mr. Planché might have been found dining with Mr. David James at the Green Room Club. And here we may relate a hitherto unpublished anecdote of the Somerset Herald. Many years ago he brought out at the St. James's Theatre a piece in which the stock characters of French comedy in the seventeenth century were introduced. "Why have you called one of them Poisson?" *The Times* critic asked him, after the first performance. "Because," replied Mr. Planché, "that *was* the name of one of them." "No," said Mr. Oxenford, "it was not the name of the character, but of the actor who made the character his own—Raymond Poisson." *Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.*

It does not appear to be "generally known" that the unhappy king who was represented in the *Crimson Cross* may be said to have established the first theatre in Paris. At the end of the fourteenth century the authorities of that city thought proper to suppress the Mysteries. The pious men accustomed to take part therein appealed to Charles VI., who in 1402 authorized them to take possession of a salle in the Hôpital de la Trinité, Rue Saint Denis, and play whenever they liked. Before that the Confrères de la Passion had been without a home. The royal deed "fut fait en nostre hostel lez Saint Paul, au mois de décembre l'an de grâce MCCCCII., et de nostre règne le xxiii."

THE death is announced of Mr. Richard Henry Dana, father of the author of *Two Years Before the Mast*. Born in 1787, the senior Dana began his career as one of the editors of the *North American Review*, and in 1821 established a periodical called *The Idle Man*. The acumen and impartiality displayed in some dramatic criticisms he wrote for this paper excited the admiration of Edmund Kean. "I do not as a rule heed criticism," said the tragedian to the author of *Old New York*, "for after an actor has made a deep study of a character he feels beyond the animadversions of the press. Dana, however, understands me; he is a philosophical man, and I shall take his work with me to England." By both his poetry and prose writings Mr. Dana had established a high reputation.

KARL BLIND, writing in reference to Miss Carmichael's recently-published letter, says the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* are an echo from the ancient Germanic creed—an echo, moreover, coming to us in the oldest Teutonic verse-form, that is, in the staff-rime. It has always struck him as noteworthy that in the greater part of the scene between the Weird Sisters, Macbeth, and Banquo, and wherever the Witches come in,

Shakspere uses the staff-rime in a very remarkable manner. Not only does this add powerfully to the archaic impressiveness and awe, but it also seems to bring the form and figure of the Sisters of Fate more closely within the circle of the Teutonic idea. The very first scene in the first act of *Macbeth* opens strongly with the staff-rime:—

“1st Witch. **W**hen shall **w**e three meet again—
In thunder, lightning, or **i**n rain?

2nd Witch. **W**hen the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and **w**on.

3rd Witch. That will be ere **s**et of **s**un.

1st Witch. Where **t**he place?

2nd Witch. Upon **t**he heath.

3rd Witch. There to **m**eeet with **M**acbeth.

1st Witch. I **c**ome, **G**raymalkin!

All. Paddock **c**alls. **A**non.

Fair is **f**oul, and **f**oul is **f**air.

Hover through the **f**og and **f**ilthy air.

Near Wessobrunn, in Upper Bavaria, there has been found, of late, a rudely-sculptured three-headed image. It is looked upon as an ancient effigy of the German Norns. The Cloister of the Three Holy Bournes, or Fountains, which stands close by the place of discovery, is supposed to have been set up on ground that had once served for pagan worship. Curiously enough, the central head of the slab is *bearded*.

M. LAFITTE, the dramatist, is dead. He began life as an actor, and for some years played confidants under Talma, who set a high value upon his friendship. Renouncing the histrionic profession, Lafitte became a journalist, a novelist, and a playwright. His best plays were founded upon passages in the history of France in the eighteenth century. In 1835 he edited Fleury's *Mémoires*, a work of considerable interest. He was a chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and had been a “reader” at the Théâtre Français, and Vice-President of the Société des Gens des Lettres and of the Commission des Auteurs] Dramatiques. For some years he had ceased to write.

THE year before the coronation of Louis I., of Bavaria, there was born in Limerick, Ireland, Maria Dolores Porris. When she became a woman she married a Dublin captain, but left him and became a danseuse in Paris. Not long afterwards she found her way to the court of Munich. The old King became infatuated with the actress, and made her the Countess of Landsfeld. Two years later came the uprising of his people. They insisted that Lola Montez, the name by which the danseuse was known, should quit the kingdom, and she whose sway had been great in the politics of Bavaria was compelled to seek safety in Florence. There she gave birth to a daughter, who as she approached woman's estate received the title of her mother, and who is now lecturing in the United States. “My mother,” she recently said to an interviewer, “was really married to King Louis. In America the union would have been held to be valid. My half-brother, Maximilian, ascended the throne soon afterwards, when

my father had abdicated. My earliest recollections are of a convent life in the Black Forest, where I should have been kept until now if it had not been for Dr. Döllinger."

THE *Academy* draws attention to an etching in the new number of the *Gazette Archéologique* from a Tanagra terra-cotta of an aged satyr sitting on rocks, with a wine-skin for a cushion, and with a statuette of Silenus at his side. M. Trivier, the writer of the article which accompanies it, thinks that the figure is not in reality a satyr, but an actor in the part of a satyr, such as is frequently found among bronze statuettes. Not only is the attitude that of an actor, but the face is that of a mask, while the garment worn round the loins would alone show that we have here to do with an actor.

FORTY years ago, on the north side of the Strand and near Exeter Hall, was a baker's shop, which was seldom without some theatrical customer buying a bun or cake as a pretext for having a chat with the proprietor of the establishment on stage subjects. The owner of the establishment was a Mr. Simpson, who had played with Edmund Kean in his boyhood, and was more in love with the footlights than the trade to which he had succeeded. He was always ready at a moment's notice to fill up any vacancy that might be created by an actor's illness, and as he knew by heart every Shakspearean play, and could study any part assigned at five minutes' notice, his services were often in requisition. His daughter, Miss Maria Simpson, inheriting the stage proclivities of her father, went on the boards, appeared as the Fairy Queen in the Drury Lane pantomime of 1858, afterwards acted at the Strand with much success in extravaganzas, and eventually was associated with her husband, Mr. W. H. Liston, in the management of the Olympic. She died on the 25th of February, as was briefly recorded in our last issue.

"WHY," writes Mr. Blanchard, "does there come back at this moment a bright memory of boyhood, of swinging by the light of fireflies in a large garden, with the atmosphere of a tropical night, heavy with the perfume of flowers, and the ripples of the Hudson River? The place was Bloomingdale, a lovely summer retreat a few miles distant from the city of New York, and the time the middle of 1832. I well remember there was then swinging with me a beautiful girl of eighteen, who was staying with me at the boarding-house to which these romantic grounds were attached. Clever, but unassuming, and as great a favourite with her brethren and sisters of the profession as with the playgoing public, Anne Waring was one of the most intelligent actresses of her time. After the death of her first husband, Mr. Sefton, she married James William Wallack, who came to this country in 1853, and became lessee and manager of the Marylebone Theatre. The Lady Macbeth of Mrs. J. W. Wallack deservedly won high commendation from all the London critics. In later years she expended much time and money in works of charity, and no better actress or truer-hearted woman ever lived than the once-fascinating girl, Anne Waring, who died three months ago."

At the Play.

—♦—
IN LONDON.

THEATRICAL doings, which generally languish during the month which precedes Easter, have of late been duller than is usual even at this season of the year. At the Adelphi, however, a bold and liberal bid for popularity was made by the Messrs. Gatti; new brooms determined to sweep very clean, no matter what may be the cost of such an operation. In Mr. "Saville Rowe" they secured an author whose dramatic work has hitherto been uniformly successful, consisting, as it does, of adaptations from the French, made with singular and unerring good taste. The omens afforded by *Peril* and by *Diplomacy*, to say nothing of *Tears, Idle Tears*, and *The Vicarage*, appeared exceptionally favourable, and if Mr. "Saville Rowe" had only succeeded in finding suitable material to work upon there is little doubt that his historical drama would have justified the most favourable expectations. In the engagement of a company moreover to illustrate the new piece the management spared no effort to secure the most suitable and most effective players. Miss Adelaide Neilson, Mr. Hermann Vezin, and Mr. Henry Neville, are each of them artists who have made for themselves a prominent position and can command high remuneration for their services. The mounting of the play was elaborate, and many of the dresses were the best of their kind that have been seen on the stage for many a long day. The promise seemed excellent, and Messrs. Gatti may fairly have expected to score a success which would carry them well over the summer; but the performance resulted in a series of misfortunes. In the first place the representatives of two of the minor parts were injudiciously chosen, Miss Compton especially being quite out of place as *Jacqueline*. Then, owing to poor stage management, one or two of the most striking scenes scarcely told at all, and the audience was set tittering by ridiculous little blunders which could readily have been mended. Mr. Flockton as Charles VI., made up exactly like the Heathen Chinee; Mr. Forbes Robertson as the Queen's lover absolutely declined to escape from his enemy; D'Armagnac, when he had the chance, scraps of dialogue fitted with unhappy appropriateness into references to the mishaps of the evening, and the best passages of the play went in consequence for nothing. So far the fault was not that of *The Crimson Cross* and its authors; and yet they must be held indirectly, if not directly, responsible for the result. They could not help these trifling defects of a first representation before a cynical and unappreciative audience; but if they had secured a stronger grip upon the sympathy of the house these minor mistakes would have passed unheeded. As it was, they had by their treatment of a

well-known historical episode in the career of Isabel of Bavaria contrived to arouse an interest in her love for the Chevalier de Boisredon; and thus, when at the end of the second act the Queen's lover is slain, the motive of the play is suddenly destroyed. Isabelle's animosity towards de Boisredon's murderer forms but an inadequate substitute for her half-guilty, half-guiltless passion; and as to getting up any interest in the love-affairs of the armoured, Perinet Leclerc, and the waiting-woman, Jacqueline, that is under the circumstances quite out of the question. It is a pity that this should be so, and that Mr. "Saville Rowe" should have wasted upon the material supplied him by Mr. E. Manuel so much literary labour. Much of the dialogue of *The Crimson Cross* is well worthy the reputation of its author, and a love-scene in the first act is full of grace and tenderness and warmth. On the whole, the drama certainly deserved a better fate. By Miss Neilson the part of the heroine was played exactly as such parts should be played. She contrived to win her audience to her side even when Queen Isabel's conduct was least winning: if not exactly queenly she was womanly, and she threw the genuine ring of life and earnestness into every speech that she spoke. Rarely, indeed, has she been fitted with a part better calculated to display to advantage her special characteristics; and her several attitudes towards D'Armagnac de Boisredon and King Charles afforded opportunities for a series of effective contrasts, of which she was not slow to avail herself. Mr. Henry Neville, as Perinet, struggled loyally to atone for defects not his own, and almost persuaded us to believe that the hand of Jacqueline was a fitting reward for his valour. Though there was but little animation in Mr. Hermann Vezin's villain, and though he might certainly have made more of D'Armagnac's fight with de Boisredon and his death at the hands of Perinet, he yet gives adequate weight to the important part. As to the share in the representation taken by Mr. Flockton, Mr. Forbes Robertson, Miss Compton, and Mr. Markby, the less said the better; but Miss Clara Jecks deserves a word of praise for her spirited illustration of a small part.

THE difficulty of the task attempted by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, in the new play produced at the Olympic theatre just as we are going to press, is not likely to be underrated, even by those who are least pleased with the result. It would demand something more than mere adaptive power to fit Goethe's grand tragedy to the practical purposes of the English stage; but Mr. Gilbert has already amply proved that this is by no means the limit of his dramatic faculty. The difficulty lies deeper than this; lies, as we take it, in the fact that, except for such superficial uses as are made of the subject in the libretti of operas, the story itself is not one fitted for purely dramatic treatment at all. The charm of Goethe's poem is found in its philosophy and its incidental dialogues, often far removed from the action of the piece; it is for contemplation, and not for illustration. All this, however, would doubtless be admitted by the author of *Gretchen* who has accordingly striven to catch the animating spirit of the German play, whilst almost wholly changing its substance. His Faustus he places in a convent, whither he has

retreated in despair after being cruelly jilted. Sore with the injustice from which he has suffered, galled by the restraints of a life which to him is death in life, and madly envious of the happy love described to him by his friend Gottfried, the young monk accepts the insidious proposal of Mephisto, and promises that on a pure innocent maiden being found for him, she shall be "my guide, my hope, my monitress." Supernaturally the fair form of Gretchen is brought before him, and he casts all his scruples with his priesthood to the winds. As he disavows any compact with Mephisto the motive here is somewhat attenuated and confused; for it becomes hard to see the precise bearings of the situation unless we fall back upon previous knowledge of the original. After this Faustus makes Gretchen his wife, yet not his wife, since it seems that he cannot on ceasing to be a priest become a husband. Gretchen was Gottfried's hoped-for bride, and thus Faustus's crime is doubly-dyed. The conclusion of the play, towards which Mephisto is practically forgotten after he has been injudiciously allowed to show an essentially human weakness, is far inferior to its commencement. Gretchen, dying of disgrace on learning that her lover is or was a priest, shelters him from Gottfried's just anger, and the play flickers out in a scene which could only gain the necessary strength from acting very different from that which it obtains. Miss Marion Terry, charmingly though she indicates the purity of Gretchen, stops short at graceful refinement, and as Mr. Conway's romance lacks something of the true ring, the hapless lovers never really secure our sympathies. The grim humour of Mr. Archer's Mephisto, and the pathos of Mrs. Bernard Beere in a small part, are the only strong points in the interpretation, Mr. Billington being misplaced as Gottfried. Thus Mr. Gilbert's play reads far better than it acts, at any rate at the Olympic, where, however, it is placed on the stage with all due taste. Its interest is, perhaps, for the head rather than for the heart, and though many of Gretchen's speeches are exquisitely tender, the best literary workmanship is to be found in scenes from which she is absent. The experiment is not less interesting than bold, but its success scarcely promises more than a *succès d'estime*.

By the retirement of Mr. Chippendale, which took place at the Lyceum Theatre on the 24th February, the stage has lost one of its most remarkable votaries. He seemed to be expressly destined by nature to represent the old gentleman of the comedy of a hundred years ago, and for many years divided the homage of the playgoing world with Mr. Phelps as Sir Peter Teazle. He could also grasp the nicest shades of character in Shakspearean comedy, as was shown by his Adam in *As You Like It*. Mr. Chippendale was originally employed in James Ballantyne's office, where Scott, who knew his father well, would pat him on the head and call him "a chip of the old block." In 1819 he went on the stage, and in 1853, after a lucrative tour in America, was engaged at the Haymarket. The proceeds of the performance of *Hamlet* on the night of his retirement, amounting to nearly £300, were presented to him without any deduction by Mr. Irving—"a princely and, I believe, unprecedented gift," said the veteran in his address to the audience,

"from a young actor to an old one, and enhanced in value by the delicate and graceful manner in which the whole thing has been managed by him."

Mr. SOTHERN's revival of his familiar impersonation of David Garrick in Robertson's adapted comedy of that name is noteworthy, chiefly on account of the indifferent support which the Haymarket—once so famous for its "all-round" company—affords to a star actor. Except for Mr. Howe, who is always sound in his art, the general representation of the play was weak in the extreme, where it was not marred by exaggeration worthy only of a third-rate house devoted to domestic melodrama and farce. It is possible that this state of affairs reacted upon Mr. Sothorn himself, for his David Garrick certainly did not seem to have mellowed and improved with age. The simulation of drunkenness in the famous second act seems lacking in subtlety of meaning, inasmuch as many of its most laughable features—and it is of course as laughter-moving as ever—are characteristic rather of the genuine intoxication of a vulgar man than of the pretended tipsiness of the gentleman. It is, however, only fair to admit that, as Garrick's object is to disgust the young lady who is watching him with such horror, there are great difficulties in the way of accomplishing his object by refined and natural means. But it is by their treatment of great difficulties that great comedians must be judged.

At the Duke's theatre a morning performance was wasted over a ridiculous "musical and mythological" play by a Mr. Swarbreck. This was originally called *Philip and Ethel*, and is now named *The Queen*. Its subject is the deterioration of character suffered by a happy and contented young wife on her sudden and unlooked-for elevation from middle-class life to the throne which causes her to readily obey a law which compels her separation from her husband, and to throw the wretched man into prison when he ventures to object. This motive is worked out in so jejune a manner, with such awkward abruptness and such inconsistency as to produce an effect ludicrous, rather than impressive after any other fashion. The association of artists like Mr. W. H. Stephens and Miss Caroline Hill with so foolish a piece is to be regretted, though Miss Hill certainly did all that was to be done towards giving the amateurish work the chance of a *succès d'estime*. For the rest the representation was about on a par with the piece. The incidental music by Mr. F. Clifton, including a bright "Bell" melody and a stirring "Harvest Chorus" more than fulfilled all the requirements in the respect of Mr. Swarbreck's work.

A VERY pretty comedietta at the Court Theatre, by Mr. Val. Prinsep, depends for its neat little plot upon a difference between a couple of affectionate sisters as to the correct interpretation of a proposal of marriage addressed to one of them by their cousin Dick. Dick has so managed to word his letter as to leave it doubtful whether he is asking the elder girl for her hand or for her influence over the younger sister. The embroglio thus caused is very pleasantly manipulated by Mr. Prinsep, as well as by Miss Kate

Pattison, who indicates with charming truthfulness the struggle in the elder sister's mind as she discovers what she believes to be her mistake. Miss Grahame provides in the sprightly school-girl an agreeable companion-picture, and the interpretation, like the play, wins well-deserved success.

IN THE PROVINCES.

THE spangled hero and his companions were last month laid to rest until next winter, and the ordinary course of provincial theatricals was resumed. Among the distinguished players on tour were Miss Kate Bateman, Mr. Barry Sullivan, Miss Heath, Mr. Dillon, Miss Marriott, Miss Jenny Lee, Miss Laverne, Mr. Calvert, and the Vokes Family. It seems strange that we should not have to add the name of Mr. Toole to the list, but that genial comedian will take a restless rest until Easter, when he appears at Birmingham. Mr. Sullivan appeared early in the month at Edinburgh, where a singular incident occurred. Between the fourth and fifth acts of *Richard III.* there was a delay, and when Mr. Sullivan appeared some sounds of disapprobation were heard. Evidently taken by surprise, he looked for the moment at the audience and then walked off the stage, and the curtain was lowered. Mr. Howard, coming forward, said the delay was caused by the necessity of making a complete change of dress between the acts, and it was not right that Mr. Sullivan should have been subjected to such an insult. Then the curtain went up again, Mr. Sullivan re-appeared, and the play was concluded amidst loud applause. The *Daily Review*, speaking of his *Lear*, says that "without being ever likely to be one of his most popular impersonations, it is in some senses one of his best. The make-up is itself something remarkable—a disguise so perfect that one can see in it in gait, look, or manner nothing to identify it with the actor himself or with any of his better-known parts. It may, indeed, be questioned whether the tottering walk and the trembling head may not be characteristics a little overdone. Certainly they seem a little out of keeping with the hale, strong voice of the actor—conspicuous in the more animated passages. Mr. Sullivan, however, does not suffer his audience to be long diverted by mere outward show. The development of *Lear's* character—rash, hot, and impulsive in its every phase, until accumulated misfortune has diminished, though it has not altogether quenched its fire, and has turned its natural benignity to gall—was marked by many fine and delicate gradations." Mr. Sullivan's engagement in modern Athens ended under a cloud. On the 14th of March he obtained an injunction against the lessees of the theatre allowing the house to be used by some musical amateurs on the following day for a performance of *Stradella*. He maintained that by the terms of his engagement he had an exclusive right to the use of the theatre while he was in the city, and that at the time fixed for the musical performance he required the stage for the purposes of rehearsal. That night he was received with a volley of hisses and missiles, but persisted in playing out the character he had assumed. Mr. Howard, in a letter to the news-

papers, characterised the statements in which the application was based as absurd and untrue, and declared that as long as the present lessees held the theatre Mr. Sullivan should not again play there. The tragedian soon afterwards took his departure for Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he appeared on the 17th. Mr. Calvert is going about with a piece called *Æsop*. The scene is laid in Paris at the time of the Mississippi mania, and the principal character is the Hunchback of the Rue Quincampoix. The piece, albeit ill-written, is not uninteresting, and gains much from Mr. Calvert's acting. Miss Laverne brought out at Manchester a version by Mr. Reece of *Babiole*, in which she plays the heroine with considerable *verve* and brightness.

IN PARIS.

THE chief work of the late M. Théodore Barrière, *Les Faux Bonshommes*, was lately revived with conspicuous success at the Vaudeville. The first production of this play denotes an era in the history of French comedy, which for some years previously had been founded upon intrigue, but thereafter sought to hold up the mirror to manners. This change is particularly apparent in the earlier works of M. Sardou. *Les Faux Bonshommes* seems as attractive as ever, thanks to the acting of M. Delaunoy as Peponnet (his original part), of M. Parade as Dufourré, and M. Dieudonné as Edgar. No fewer than five pieces pertaining to comic opera were brought out during the month. Herr von Suppé's *Fatinitza*, a graceful version of which was prepared by Mr. Henry S. Leigh for a London theatre last year, is on the *affiches* of the Nouveautés. The story is made up of a series of complications arising from the assumption by a young Russian officer of female attire. The original libretto was a translation of Scribe's *Circassiennes*, which in its turn was derived from *Faublas*. While the piece was in rehearsal at the Nouveautés, Madame Scribe obtained an injunction against the performance there of her late husband's work; and upon that the manager engaged MM. Delacour and Wieder to fit the music with a new libretto. That their writing is inferior to Scribe's in pungency and brightness is certain, but the liveliness of the music has secured for the piece an unequivocal success. Mdle. Preziosi, as at Brussels, represents the young officer. *La Courte Echelle*, the latest novelty at the Opera Comique, has failed as conspicuously as *Fatinitza* has succeeded. The libretto is from the pen of M. de la Rounat, and is based upon one of his most attractive novelettes. The music, composed by M. Membrée, is, however, neither various nor tuneful; and even a very sprightly performance of the heroine by Madame Chevrier failed to propitiate the audience. The same theatre has also presented us with two short pieces: one, *La Zingarella*, shared the fate of *La Courte Echelle*; the other, *Le Pain Bis*, in which a man is kept as much as possible within doors by his wife for prudential reasons, and who seeks relief from the consequent *ennui* by making violent love to the cook, a possibility which Madame had completely overlooked, was well received. M. Hervé's last comic opera, *La Mar-*

quise des Rues, ought to restore the waning fortunes of the Bouffes, where it was brought out at the end of February. The story deals with the adventures of a lady who, while searching for evidence in support of a disputed claim to high rank, has to assist her husband in the trade of conjuring, fortune-telling, &c. *La Marquise des Rues*, unlike the majority of comic operas, is perfectly inoffensive, and the music is in the composer's happiest vein. Madame Ben-natti appears to great advantage as the Marquise, while Miss Kate Munroe, as a vivacious English girl, sensibly extends her popularity here. *Le Chatiment*, a gloomy drama resembling *Le Fils Naturel* in its plot, has been revived at the Théâtre Cluny, and the interest awakened by *L'Assommoir* as to the workmen of Paris has induced the managers of the Historique to fall back upon *Les Foubouriens*. Towards the end of the month a good deal of expectation was raised by the production at the Gymnase of *Nounou*, a comedy by the authors of *Bébé*. This expectation, however, has been terribly disappointed; the new comedy, the amusing power of which depends upon certain adventures of a happy father and his wife's nurse's husband, is exceedingly poor. Molière's *Don Juan* may now be seen at the Odéon, with graceful M. Valbel and drily-humorous M. Porel as Don Juan and Sganarelle respectively.

IN BERLIN.

No new piece was produced at the Royal Playhouse during the past month, but there were a few interesting revivals, foremost amongst which was Herr Albert Lindner's *Brutus und Collatinus*, a five-act tragedy, which gained the Schiller prize in 1866, and was produced at this house for the first time in January, 1867, but soon vanished from its boards, owing to the illness and death of the actor who played Brutus. In spite of its great faults of construction this tragedy is effective, and well merits revival. It deals with the expulsion of Tarquin and his family, the banishment of Collatinus, and the conspiracy of the sons of Brutus—three events which, though intimately connected with one another, do not form a united action. Tarquin, his wife Tullia, and his son Sextus, who, together with Lucretia, occupy the foreground in the first three acts, do not appear at all in the other acts, and thus the interest is shifted, to the total destruction of all unity of action. But in spite of this, as we have said, the tragedy is highly effective, especially when acted so well as it was on this occasion. The difficult character of Brutus is admirably represented by Herr Kahle, who was particularly successful in illustrating the conflict between civic duty and parental affection. Herr Ludwig was excellent as Collatinus, and Fraülein Meyer gained a fresh triumph as Lucretia, telling her husband what had befallen her in tones which thrilled the audience. In short, the performance was highly successful. The other revivals referred to were those of Brachvogel's *Nareiss* and Moreto's *Donna Diana*, in each of which Frau Olga Lewinsky played a leading part in so satisfactory a manner that she will probably be asked to become a permanent member of the company. She is at present appearing as a "guest."

DURING the latter half of February, the Residenz Theater gave a *spectacle coupé*, consisting of Goethe's *Die Geschwister*, in which Frau Niemann played Marianne with admirable finish; a German version of *Une Partie de Piquet*, in which Herr Friedrich Haase represented with great effect the testy old gentleman whom Mr. Hare has made familiar to Londoners by his acting in the version called *A Quiet Rubber*, and two other one-act pieces. At the conclusion of the engagement of Frau Niemann and Herr Haase, the *Fourchambault* was revived for a few evenings, and was succeeded on the 10th March by *Zwei Damen*, a German version of the *Due Dame* of Signor Paolo Ferrari, the plot of which was fully stated in *The Theatre* on the first production of the piece in Turin. (See the number of the 25th September, 1877.) The success in Berlin, owing chiefly to the inadequacy of the acting, fell far short of the brilliant triumph chronicled by our Turin critic.

THE Wallner Theater produced on the 1st March a new four-act comedy by Herr R. Elcho, entitled *Onkel Hans*, in which the time-worn topic of the kidnapping of a child by gipsies was too seriously treated for the laughter-loving frequenters of the house. Consequently it had to be withdrawn after a very few performances, and the unusually long run of *Doctor Klaus* was resumed till that popular piece reached its 115th representation, a figure seldom attained in Berlin. During the month *Andreas Hofer*, an early work of Herr Auerbach, was produced at the National Theater with faint success, and Herr Laube's *Prinz Friedrich* proved less attractive at the Stadt Theater than at the house of the same name in Vienna. The French company at the Saal Theater have added to their *répertoire* the *Fils Naturel* of M. Dumas *filz*, and the *Mlle. de Belle Isle* of the elder Dumas, amongst other pieces.

IN VIENNA.

THE Burgtheater has produced but one novelty during the past month, namely, a German version of M. Edouard Pailleron's comedy *L'Age Ingrat*, under the title *Spätsommer*. The original has had a run of over one hundred consecutive nights at the Paris Gymnase, and has been one of the most marked successes recently attained by that theatre. In Vienna the result was very different; in spite of good acting the piece met with a decidedly unfavourable reception on its first performance, and the verdict of the first night's audience has not since been reversed. This failure, following close upon the ill-success of an Italian version of the piece, may be attributed to the local nature of many of the allusions, which, though quickly seized by a Paris audience, are not very intelligible to the ordinary playgoer of Vienna or Milan.

THE Stadt-Theater has been more fruitful in novelties, but here again they were all of foreign origin. First in the list comes *Der doppelte Miradour*, a German version of *Les Vieilles Couches* of M. Gondinet, a piece produced at the Palais Royal some months ago with but moderate success. A semi-political farce of this kind seldom stands the test of transplantation, and M. Gondinet's piece proved no

exception to the rule. Herr Bukovics, as Miradoux, and Fräulein Schratt, as his wife, played well, but failed to overcome the coolness of the public. Next comes M. Sardou's well-known play *Ferréol*, with its striking plot founded upon a *cause célèbre*, which attracted much attention a few years ago. Herr Mylius, in the title part, had some success in a character for which he was ill-suited; Fräulein Frank, as the unhappy wife, shed tears herself, and drew them copiously from others. The only comic character, a juryman *malgré lui*, was amusingly rendered by Herr Tyrolt, and the general result was so satisfactory that *Ferréol* will probably remain in the repertory. The third novelty of the month was a Norwegian five-act play, entitled *Das neue System*, by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the author of *Ein Fallissement*, which has had an extraordinary success on the German stage. The new piece was, on the contrary, found uninteresting. The "new system" indicated in the title is a system of railway management, of which the audience never gain any distinct idea, though the play is full of allusions to it, and to another system which the hero strives to substitute for it, though his opposition to the "new system" brings him into violent conflict with the father of the girl he loves, that gentleman being a railway director. It is no wonder that the Norwegian dramatist has failed to render such an unpromising theme interesting.

On the 28th of February a vast audience assembled in the Carl Theater to see the last performance of Fräulein Link, who abandons the stage to marry a bank manager. The young lady played child-parts at the Burgtheater in her infancy, and was subsequently trained for the lyrical stage, on which she made her *début* some six years ago. Her first marked success was attained in the part of Lange in *La Fille de Madame Angot*, and since then she has maintained her place in the front rank. Her last creation was the title-part in Herr von Suppé's *Boccaccio*, which was given on this farewell occasion, Herr Tewele adding with reference to the event of the evening the following stanza to his popular "Undici" song:—

Die Stimme, die heute zum Abschied hier ertönt,
 Sie hat manches Lied uns durch süssen Klang verschönt.
 Säng' je sie wieder hier, dann schallt "Willkommen" ihr,
 Sicher von undici, dodici, tredici.

Fräulein Link said a few simple words of farewell to her numerous friends, who heaped floral offerings upon her. At the beginning of March a new programme was produced consisting of three comediettas of French origin, and of a musical piece, called *Engelsstimmen*, in which ten girls, whose heads alone were visible to the audience, sang sweet music from the clouds, the effect being rather novel.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IN Milan the latter part of February was marked by the production at the Manzoni Theatre of an important novelty in the shape of a three-act drama in verse, by Signor Giuseppe Giacosa, the author of *Una Partita a Scacchi*, *Il Trionfo d'amore*, and other

successful pieces. *Luisa*, as the new drama is entitled, must be added to the list of its author's successes. Its subject is adultery, that eternal theme of the modern dramatist; and the erring wife is rendered so sympathetic that the audience at the first performance were hardly satisfied with her tragic end. The heroine is given in marriage by her guardian to a certain Count Gino, one of the most infamous villains ever conceived by poet or playwright. She has been brought up from infancy with her guardian's son, Andrea, for whom she entertains a warm affection. Contaminated by ten years of cohabitation with her libertine husband, whose villany goes to the extent of seeking to turn his wife's charms to profitable account, Luisa is left alone for a year by the Count's absence abroad, and in that interval, being by the blind folly of her guardian brought into contact with his son Andrea, she yields to the irresistible fascination of a life-long love. The husband returns, and learning what has happened during his absence declares his determination to avenge himself on the man who has dishonoured him; whereupon the wife suddenly produces a dagger and plunges it into her breast. This *dénouement* was considered too melodramatic, but it is difficult to suggest a more satisfactory solution, the death of the brutal husband and the union of the lovers being inadmissible on moral grounds. The piece is written in the Martellian metre, of which Signor Giacosa is the greatest living master, and the brilliant, flowing verse, rich in imagery and warm with passionate expression, bears up a story which told in prose would hardly prove effective. Signora Marini acted the title part with immense effect, and was greatly applauded. Signor Reinach played the lover with a telling concentration of passion, and Signor Novelli showed much discretion in the ungrateful part of the husband. At the beginning of March, Signora Marini set out for Naples, to become the leading actress of a new company which is to bear her name. Before leaving Milan she gave a performance of *Quella Signora che Aspetti*, a translation, by a gentleman who writes under the pseudonym of Yorick, of Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy's monologue, *Madame attend Monsieur*, which Madame Chaumont has made familiar to London playgoers. At La Scala the only noteworthy event of the month was the appearance of Mdle. Heilbron as Violetta in the *Traviata*. She was successful, though her success was somewhat impaired by the feeble support given by the representatives of the other characters, who were all very much below the standard of a first-class opera house.

In Rome, the event of the past month was the production at the Apollo Theatre of the *Amleto* of M. Ambroise Thomas, which met with a stormy reception on its first performance, and does not seem likely to become popular with the Roman public. Signor Graziani was found unequal to the title part, but Signorina Donadio, as Ophelia, did much to change the fortunes of the performance, her singing and acting being equally effective. At the Valle Theatre, M. Lecocq's *Petit Duc* has attained a great and deserved success, being rendered in excellent style by a very efficient French company. Dramatic performances have been given

at the Capranica to thin houses, the pieces performed being too well known to attract the public, who cry out for novelties and seldom get them.

IN MADRID.

THE past month has been unusually unproductive of dramatic novelties of importance. The larger theatres have produced absolutely no new piece deserving of attention, though several ephemeral productions have appeared, only to vanish into oblivion. A performance for the benefit of the leading actress of the Teatro Español gave Señor Calvo an opportunity of appearing as the Moor in a Spanish version of Shakspeare's *Othello*, and the result was highly satisfactory. The actor kept well within bounds during the earlier acts, and thus rendered all the more terrible his explosion of passion when the suggestions of Iago have thoroughly roused his jealousy. The gradual progress of suspicion in his mind was finely indicated, and his outbursts of passion produced a great effect. Señorita Mendoza Tenorio, the *bénéficiaire*, was a graceful representative of the hapless Desdemona.

Passing over the other dramatic theatres, such as the Apolo and the Comedia, which have produced nothing worthy of notice, we come to the musical houses, which have thrown their purely dramatic rivals into the shade. At the Teatro Real, a strong opera company, comprising Señor Gayarré and Mesdames Borghi-Mamo and Sanz, together with other well-known singers, has been attracting good audiences throughout the month. *Don Giovanni* has been given nine times with a strong cast, the Zerlina of M^{me}. Borghi-Mamo being particularly admired. The only novelty produced was a comic opera written expressly for Madrid by Signor Usiglio, and entitled *Le Donne Curiose*, which met with a very favourable reception, though critics are divided as to the merits of the work, some lauding it to the skies, while others regard it as unworthy of production at a first-class opera-house. It seems to us that the music is of too light a character to render it a fit addition to the repertory of the Teatro Real; the orchestration is, however, skilful, and the music is so graceful and melodious that we may safely predict for it a success in minor theatres equal to that achieved by the composer's other work, *Le Educande di Sorrento*. The whole strength of the company was engaged in the performance, and the favourable reception accorded to the new opera was no doubt greatly due to a representation such as rarely falls to the lot of an opera of so light calibre. The Teatro de la Zarzuela, a house devoted to *opéra bouffe* and comic opera, produced towards the end of February a new piece, in which the music was subordinate to the libretto, the latter being a work of real literary merit. *Camoens*, as the piece is called, is from the pen of Señor Zapata, the author of *La Capilla de Lanuza*, and deals with an episode in the adventurous life of the great Portuguese poet. Descriptions of a shipwreck and of a battle are amongst the most effective passages, and were much applauded. The music, composed by Señor Marques, is original, and was well rendered

by Señora Soler di Franco, and others. By the way, the author has dedicated his work to Señor Castelar, the eminent orator and statesman.

IN NEW YORK.

THE popularity of *H.M.S. Pinafore* has increased rather than diminished with lapse of time, not only in New York but all over the United States. It would take some time and trouble to enumerate the companies now engaged in playing the piece, which, curiously enough, is distinctively English in all its features. *The Sorcerer*, in many respects a superior work, has, on the other hand, attracted but little attention. Other forms of entertainment, however, are not yet entirely driven from the field. At the end of February, Mr. Boucicault's version of *Pauline* was brought out at Wallack's theatre under the title of *Spellbound*. It did not succeed, and soon afterwards gave place to *A Scrap of Paper*. Mr. Wallack's Prosper Couramont will take rank with his best efforts. Mr. Mapleson's opera season began at the end of February, to be continued for some weeks. *Lohengrin*, with Madame Gerster as the heroine, did not evoke much enthusiasm, but with other operas Mr. Mapleson has been exceedingly fortunate. Mr. Paulding, who says that he is related to Mr. Henry Irving, and who strives to catch that tragedian's manner, has been playing Hamlet, Bertuccio, and other parts at the Lyceum with fair success. The Park Theatre is relying upon *Engaged*, the peculiar humour of which appears to be keenly enjoyed here. Much regret is expressed at the non-appearance of Mr. Sothern in a part so admirably suited to him as that of Cheviot Hill. Miss Cavendish was to have appeared at the Broadway Theatre on the 10th, but her health would not permit of it. *The Banker's Daughter* continues to attract crowds to the Union Square Theatre.

ON A CERTAIN "LUCIA."

A RECOLLECTION OF THE TEATRO NICCOLINI, FLORENCE,

March 30th, 1878.

BY FRANKFORT MOORE.

A SOUL-BREATHED song, more gracious than is heard
 In summer woods when the close-woven net
 Of scented leaves with evening dew is wet,
 And the world, silent, listens to one bird;
 A song that seemed the soul of beauty stirr'd
 Into new life in spring, when men forget
 All life but love—that flower which wakes while yet
 The coming of the swallow is deferred:
 Such wondrous strains trilled and thrilled through the air
 That my eyes closed in swoon of ecstasy.
 When the song waned I waked, and lo, o'er me
 I saw the melody taken shape, for there
 The singer stood, all passion-flushed and fair—
 Herself the soul of her own melody.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

THE *Lady of Lyons* is to be revived at the Lyceum during Easter week, and towards the end of the season will give place to the *Corsican Brothers*. The attractiveness of the present revival, however, is as yet undiminished. In the *Lady of Lyons*, Pauline will be played by Miss Ellen Terry, Damas by Mr. Walter Lacy, Beauseant by Mr. Forrester, Glavis by Mr. Bellew, Madame Deschappelles by Miss Pauncefort, and the Widow by Mrs. Chippendale.

MR. TENNYSON has written for the Lyceum a new play in five acts and verse, entitled *Eleanor and Rosamond*. Mr. Green, the author of the *History of the English People*, says that, with all his researches into the annals of the twelfth century he had never arrived at so vivid a conception of the characters of Henry II. and his Court as is embodied in this drama.

IT is said that Barnum on one occasion offered Madame Patti an engagement at Boston. "But," said the *Diva*, "they have already hissed me; I shall not sing there again." "I don't wish you to," replied the Yankee. "I intend to advertise you there largely, and on the eve of your appearance you will elope." "Elope?" "Yes, in the newspapers. Then I shall take you to New Orleans, where your appearance will create a *furor*. Nothing makes a *prima donna* so popular as an elopement." "And what am I to have?" "Two thousand dollars and a third of the profits." The bargain was concluded, and Madame appeared at New Orleans with enormous success.

HERR WAGNER, it is reported, is now endeavouring to collect all the manuscripts of his literary and musical works, most of which have been scattered in various directions. He is still seeking to find out what has become of, among other productions, the manuscript of an opera-libretto he wrote for his friend Reissiger, the composer, since dead. Manuscripts of Herr Wagner may safely be deposited at our office, whence they will forthwith be transmitted to Bayreuth.

MR. BROWNING has accepted the presidency of the New Shakspeare Society. The founder of the Society, Mr. Furnivall, resolved that no prince or nobleman should head the new society founded to do honour to Shakspeare; and from 1873 until now the Society's prospectus has contained the words, "The presidency of the Society will be left vacant till one of our greatest living poets sees that his duty is to take it."

LORD HERTFORD has resigned the office of Lord-Chamberlain, and will be succeeded by Lord Mount-Edgcumbe.

THE report that Mr. Bancroft is writing a biography of Mr. Robertson is unfounded, although at some future time he may be expected to produce such a work.

MR. CLEMENT SCOTT has been presented at Court.

MADAME MARIE ROZE does not meet with unqualified approbation in the rural districts. A Wisconsin critic, writing to the Oshkosh *North-western*, complains that her Italian has a French brogue to it. "This," he observes with severe decision, "would prevent her ever becoming a favourite in Oshkosh."

THE arrangements for the programme of the inaugural festival, in connexion with the Shakspeare Memorial, are now making steady progress. Mrs. Theodore Martin (Miss Helen Faucit) has consented to take the part of Beatrice on the opening night. Mr. Barry Sullivan will play Benedick, and has offered to assist during the whole of the festival. It was hoped that Mr. Henry Irving could also have assisted at the festival, but the difficulties of interrupting the performances at the Lyceum Theatre have proved insuperable.

MR. GILBERT may look back to the action against *The Theatre* with some satisfaction. No sooner did he enter the witness-box to give evidence for the defendants than the plaintiffs' counsel proposed the settlement that was soon afterwards come to. Mr. Straight, to whom the examination-in-chief of the witnesses on the other side was confided, had himself called Mr. Gilbert, but was speedily made aware of his mistake by a cry of horror and a fierce gesticulation from the plaintiffs' solicitor, Mr. George Lewis. "No, no," gasped the latter, "Gilbert against us; call Tom Taylor." And after the trial, we are informed, he was heard to speak angrily to the learned counsel, more especially as to the manner in which the case had terminated. Mr. Straight said nothing, but has since accepted a judgeship in India.

THIS case, it may be added, was sadly misreported; indeed, we may doubt whether any clear notion of the real issue was arrived at by the reading public until the March number of *The Theatre* was published.

MR. SERGEANT PARRY is a learned gentleman, and was well acquainted with the late Dr. Doran. Nevertheless, he informed the jury in this trial that the plots of most of Molière's plays were taken from the *Spanish* drama.

MR. IRVING recited the "Dream of Eugene Aram" after a performance of *The Two Roses*. Mr. Albery was asked for his opinion of the recitation. He thought it admirable; "But," said he, "there is one question I should like to put—*What became of the boy?*"

MR. BYRON says that if an actor is desirous of appearing in "several pieces" in one evening he should smoke a cigar in a nitro-glycerine factory. He would bring down the house, too.

APROPPOS of Mr. Simpson's article in this number, something diametrically opposite to the claue has more than once been introduced in London theatres. During the first performance of *The Bells* at the Lyceum Theatre somebody in the pit began to hiss Mr. Irving. "Hush!" a neighbour was heard to say to him, "*not so soon.*"

It is to be hoped the Plague may not suggest to dramatists the revival of any of the plays which Mr. Joseph Hatton, in his papers *Under the Shadow of St. Pierre*, tells us were founded on incidents of the pest which smote Europe soon after the Crusades. The story of Xavier de Maistre is a touching subject, nevertheless.

THE current nautical stage infection in America has supplied a gallant Westerner with the following poetic inspiration :—

“ He put his arm around her waist,
And swore an awful swore,
And as he jerk'd it off he said,
' I've felt that Pin—afore.' ”

IN San Francisco, lately, a young man who sent a manuscript play to a theatrical manager had it returned to him with the remark that if he would only work it over so as to make the heroine rob the bank instead of defend it, and afterwards climb up a cataract on a slack rope, with a safe on her back, while the detectives paused frightened on the brink, it might do.

TEN years ago, when Madame Schneider was the Grande Duchesse, she was, both in Paris and London, run after by everybody, from royalty downwards ; the more vulgar and outrageous her acting was, the more people went to see it. Now she is forgotten. Is it that we have repented of the error of our ways, have turned over a new leaf, and grown virtuous ? No ! Madame Schneider no longer attracts, and has sunk to the taking of minor characters at one of the Paris theatres, simply and solely because she has grown immensely stout, has lost her agility, is, in a word, decayed.

“ WAGNER's music must annoy you,” said some one to Mr. Davison. “ Oh, bless you, no ; you can say or do anything you like while it is being played.”

MRS. DION BOUCICAULT has sailed from New York for Liverpool, accompanied by her daughters, Patrice and Nina, who will be placed in a Paris school. Mrs. Boucicault said she would soon return.

M. DELAUNAY one night left the theatre in the Rue Richelieu with the manuscript of a play called *Vercingétorix* under his arm. At the corner of the street he was attacked by a footpad. “ Rascal ! ” exclaimed the actor, “ if you are not off I will break my *Vercingétorix* over your head ! ” The thief incontinently fled.

THE biter's bit. On the 12th ult., as Mr. Toole was entertaining some friends at his house, four cabmen in heavy capes knocked at the door and imperatively demanded to see him. He went out, and one of them averred that ten shillings were due to him from the rising comedian for being kept waiting outside a club. Mr. Toole could not remember the occurrence ; the other men, however, bore emphatic witness to the justice of the claim. The comedian, “ rather than have any bother about it, you know,” plunged his hand into his pocket for the money, but as he did so three of the “ cabmen ” proved to be Mr. James, Mr. Thorne, and Mr. Lewis Wingfield.

GREAT artists are content with small beginnings. In 1863 a young actress who had previously shown a natural aptitude for the stage appeared in *Montjoye*. She had but three lines to speak : " Oh ! Madame," " Ah ! Mademoiselle, que je vous remercie !" " Oh, le grand cœur, Madame." It was Madame Céline Chaumont.

MR. MONTAGUE, according to the *Boston Herald*, was a wonderful favourite with New York ladies, and well worth \$250 a week as an attraction for Wallack's Theatre. There is no exaggeration about the stories of the great numbers of letters received by Mr. Montague from women and girls who were strangers to him. How intense was the adulation was indicated by the extensive sale of his photographs. In one play he wore his hair in a flat curl at each side of his forehead. From that came the fashion among women of a row of just such curls. Two months before his death he was willing to take advantage of this special popularity. He arranged for a benefit performance at Booth's Theatre, and a week beforehand advertised that tickets could be bought at his private residence. The idea proved a hit ; the seats in the theatre were sold before the night of the performance, and the clear profit was about \$2,000.

A BALTIMORE critic, writing of Signora Majeroni, who plays the Countess Zicka in *Diplomacy*, remarks that " the mellifluousness of her voice in moments of tenderness and delicate passion is a thing to thirst for and to dream of."

ONE night at the theatre of San Carlo, Naples, Dumas the elder entered into conversation with a man who slightly resembled him, and who, when the play was over, said to him, patronizingly : " I have greatly enjoyed your conversation, sir, and hope to see more of you. If ever you visit Paris call on me. I am Alexandre Dumas."

A YOUNG author took a five-act comedy to the Folies-Marigny. " Five acts !" exclaimed the manager, " and for so small a theatre as this ? What are you thinking about ?"

MR. WILLS'S new play, to be produced at the Haymarket Theatre on Mr. Sothern's departure, is called *Helen*, and deals with Jacobite times. Three of the five acts have been received.

Two pieces are in rehearsal at the Gaiety—*Boulogne*, a farcical comedy, by Mr. Burnand, and a burlesque, by Mr. Byron, of *Notre Dame*.

MR. MAYER has secured the sole right to produce *L'Assommoir* in this country and America. The task of the adapter will not be light.

MR. MAYER, by the way, has published a small book containing an account of the Comédie Française, with biographical sketches of the Sociétaires and Pensionnaires and of a few members of the administration.

MISS JOSEPHS re-opens the St. James's Theatre.

THERE are now about a hundred and fifty companies playing *H.M.S. Pinafore* in the United States, and only one manager, Mr. Ford, of Baltimore, has made any substantial acknowledgment to the authors. Mr.

Sullivan says that Mr. Ford is not one man of a hundred, but one of a hundred and fifty.

BAD news for the Green Room Club. The Duke of Beaufort thinks of going to America with Mr. Sothern in May.

MR. H. S. LEIGH is adapting *Le Grand Casimir* for the Gaiety.

THE Vokes family go to America next year, and will then be rejoined by Miss Rosina Vokes.

L'Étincelle, a piece in one act, by M. Edouard Pailleron, has been accepted at the Comédie Française. Mdlle. Samary and M. Delauney will be in the cast.

Kernilis, a five-act drama in verse, by the author of *Jean Ducier*, is in rehearsal at the Odéon.

M. MASSENET is composing a new opera, to be called *Hérodiade*. The chief character is intended for M. Lassalle.

THE Gaité is about to produce a spectacular drama by MM. Erckmann-Chatrian and Davil, entitled *La Guerre*.

M. KONING has by him a new piece by MM. Meilhac and Halévy, with music by M. Lecocq. It is called *La Petite Mademoiselle*.

M. HERVÉ is engaged at the Folies-Bergères.

MDLLE. HEILBRONN is at Naples.

SIGNOR FIORAVANTI, the opéra-bouffe actor, has had to have a leg amputated.

THE *New Magdalen* has just been played at the Artists' Club, Moscow.

MR. JEFFERSON, it is reported, intends to make a tour with the *Parish Clerk* instead of *Rip Van Winkle*. It was written for him by Mr. Boucicault years ago.

MR. EDWIN BOOTH has purchased three and a half acres of land on the east shore, at Newport, R.I., and will soon build a summer residence on the spot.

A Winter's Tale is to be revived at Booth's Theatre, Miss Ward and Mrs. Scott-Siddons being in the cast.

It is reported that Mr. Arthur Wallack, a son of Mr. Lester Wallack, will shortly make his appearance on the stage as Hugh Chalcote, in *Ours*.

MR. DALY has assumed the management of the Standard Theatre, New York.

M. BLONDELET, of the Variétés, has received from His Majesty of Tunis the Nichan-el-Eftckbar of the fourth class.

MR. FISKE has become theatrical and musical editor of the *Spirit of the Times*.

DURING the performance of *The Chinese Question* by the Williamsons at Toledo, on the 11th February, a gentleman in the parquet produced a newspaper and commenced quietly reading. This so provoked Mr. Williamson that he stepped to the footlights, and in not very soothing tones rebuked the offender.

Literature.

ENGLISH PLAYS.*

THE latest addition to the *Library of English Literature* is not inferior in interest and value to any of its predecessors. In *English Plays* we have a thoughtful and succinct history of the drama in this country down to at least the beginning of the eighteenth century, with copious extracts from typical or otherwise remarkable pieces. The author-editor is Professor Henry Morley, whose *Journal of a London Playgoer* has placed him in the front rank of living dramatic critics. The design of *English Plays*, we may at once say, is open to adverse criticism. The work is brought down to our own days, but only an eighth of it is devoted to the drama of the last two centuries. This, even when the utmost allowance is made for the importance of what was written for the stage prior to 1680, is out of anything like historical proportion; and it is to be regretted that Mr. Morley has not reserved some of the space which he devotes to such pieces as *Gorboduc* and Preston's *Cambyzes* for more striking and representative plays of a later date. The original matter in *English Plays*, however, is worthy of his high reputation, and is liberally illustrated with portraits, sketches of stage figures, views of theatres and places associated with the drama, &c. *English Plays*, indeed, has considerable attractions for both the student of dramatic literature and the general reader.

Mr. Morley, in order to remove a wide-spread misapprehension, dwells emphatically on the fact that the English drama proper arose, not from the Miracle Plays or the Moralities, but from the study and performance of Greek and Latin plays at the Universities. Its rise, perhaps, was assisted by the development of another early form of entertainment through personation of characters—the interlude, which was usually employed by some great lord as a means of entertaining his guests after dinner, and the taste for which led to the formation of trained companies of actors. *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gorboduc* appeared; plays inspired more or less by the Greek or Latin drama came out in rapid succession, and the actors who had been accustomed to play in interludes were gradually turned into tragedians and comedians proper. They acted on scaffolds in public places, with no stage appointments

* *English Plays*; Selected, Edited, and Arranged by Henry Morley. Cassell's *Library of English Literature*.

except as to dress, and soon afterwards in inn-yards. Presently, as theatres were built one after another, a new race of dramatic authors sprang up, and one of them raised the drama to the highest point it has yet reached in the history of the world. In dealing with Shakspeare's plays Mr. Morley remarks that the author of *Hamlet*, "supreme amongst artists, if he wrote with ease, wrote also with patient thought and care, of which the traces became more and more manifest as he rose to complete mastery. He was a genial companion, not a pedantic moralist; the wisest of comrades, but no schoolmaster. The religion of his plays—and he was deeply religious—may almost be summed up in the words, Love God; love your neighbour; do your work. In one form or another he constructs his plots with an under-thought that in the fulfilment of these three duties lies the solving of all problems that can vex the heart of man."

The other Elizabethan dramatists and their immediate successors were men of rare gifts and attainments. The Puritans, however, had all along been bitterly opposed to even the semblance of an entertainment, and during the Commonwealth the theatres were arbitrarily closed. They were reopened at the Restoration, but the masculine drama of the previous three-quarters of a century was set aside in favour of something infinitely inferior. The standard of the play-house was lowered to the level of the Court. Men about town wrote plays on the Spanish model. Intrigue was substituted for plot, "obscenity for wit." If any real comic force was shown in these comedies of the Restoration it was due rather to the influence of Molière than to any inborn talent on the part of the English play-factor. The best writers of tragedy drew their inspiration from Corneille; blank verse gave place to rhymed couplets. If Shakspeare was revived at all it was in a sadly mutilated shape. Mr. Morley does not dwell long upon this degradation of the English stage; indeed, the scope of his book is already diminishing with great rapidity. "Divorced from poetry," he says, "the drama ceases to belong to literature," and by way of illustrating the completeness of that divorce he briefly describes Etherege's *Man of Mode*. In course of time a slight reaction against the obscene comedy and artificial tragedy of the Restoration became manifest; *Venice Preserved* went far to uphold the traditional repute of English tragedy, while comedy by degrees assumed a more healthy aspect. But even when this reaction was at its height the false convention of the time made itself apparent on the stage, and the birth of the domestic drama must have been hailed by many with a sense of relief. In the latter half of the eighteenth century comedy was rendered more

popular than ever by Goldsmith and Sheridan, while Foote imparted to stage caricature an importance it had not previously possessed. The French Revolution marks a new turning-point in the history of dramatic literature. The intellectual agitation induced by that event was followed by a passion for the sentimental, and in contemporary German plays a means of supplying the demand was found. Though in many respects objectionable, *The Stranger* and similar works produced a salutary effect. They often awoke the highest feelings and sensibilities of our nature, and their influence upon the rising genius of the age was shown by the many poetical plays written for the stage between the first successful appearance in London of Edmund Kean and the retirement of Macready. Then came an era of frivolous pieces and burlesque; the poetical genius of the age held aloof from the stage, and Shakspeare "spelt ruin" to the majority of English managers. During the last decade, however, the popularity of the higher drama has been restored, and many comedies of which Congreve or Farquhar would not have disdained the authorship have been produced to good purpose. It is undoubtedly a matter of regret that Mr. Morley has passed over the plays of the last century in a few pages, but the fulness and acumen with which he treats the drama in its infancy and most vigorous manhood would alone ensure for his book a hearty welcome.

OUR OLD ACTORS.*

It is not easy to understand why the papers which have appeared in *Temple Bar* on our old actors should have been republished in a collected form. The author, Mr. Barton Baker, is a *laudator temporis acti* in the worst sense of the words, seems to know but little of his subject, handles his materials in an ineffective manner, and is unable to write with grace or correctness. In the preface he tells us that he has sought to link the detached essays so as to form a chronological history of actors and acting from Shakspeare to Macready; but even if he had succeeded in this—and it can hardly be averred that he has—the value of the work would not have been increased to such an extent as to make us forget the defects we have noticed.

Mr. Baker labours to prove that the Garrick period was the "grandest in theatrical annals," that since the retirement of Roscius the art of acting has steadily declined. Every thoughtful and unbiassed student of our stage history knows that this is not

* *Our Old Actors.* By Henry Barton Baker. 2 vols. Bentley.

the case. Garrick found it comparatively easy to establish a higher reputation as an actor than his talents really warranted. The audiences of his day were willing to be pleased, and were not disposed to scan his impersonations very closely. Dramatic criticism was unknown, the records in the press of theatrical occurrences being no more than brief and arid reports. Lastly, he was a conspicuous figure in the literary and artistic world, and if his success and egotism excited jealousy or ill-will, it may at least be said that by his fine social qualities he made many friends. That the talents of such a man should have been overrated is intelligible enough, but it does not follow that we are bound to accept the friendly estimate as just. Now, what rank must we assign to him as an actor? That he had a marvellous aptitude for broad comedy there could be no doubt. His Bayes and Abel Drugger seem to have been perfect in both principle and detail. But broad comedy is not the highest walk of the drama. The greatest actor is the greatest tragedian; and as a tragedian, to say the least, Garrick did not exhibit remarkable versatility. His only great successes in the serious drama were achieved as Lear and Richard III. In the latter character he must have been materially served by the vein of comedy which runs through it almost to the last. His Othello was a dire failure, his Macbeth unequal, his Hamlet at variance with the text. He did not venture to play Shylock, Sir Giles Overreach, and other exacting characters. The cause of his comparative failure is not far to seek. Though Diderot maintains that an actor cannot lose himself in a part, one of imaginative power must be influenced more or less by the illusion of the scene, and this faculty of self-abandonment Garrick did not possess. In the middle of an affecting scene, such as the death of Lear, he would take advantage of a pause to jest with friends standing at the wings. Leigh Hunt was probably right in describing him as little better than a "quick-eyed trifle." Moreover, if he had won his rarest laurels as a tragedian he would scarcely have taken leave of the stage in a comedy. Mr. Baker's contention that Garrick was the greatest of English tragedians may be speedily disposed of. Edmund Kean succeeded not only where Garrick had succeeded, namely, as Richard and Lear, but also in parts which Garrick could not play or refrained from undertaking—Othello, Shylock, and Sir Giles. This success, too, was attested by such men as Hazlitt and Hunt, the keenest of dramatic critics. But Mr. Baker's allegations as to the decline of the stage are in some measure refuted by himself. He ascribes that decline to the substitution of free trade for protection in theatrical matters, and to the abolition of the circuits in which actors might have the advantage of a hard

training at the outset of their career. Edmund Kean had such a training; but Mr. Baker is not ingenuous enough to point out that Burbage, Betterton, and Garrick himself rose to greatness without its aid. Indeed, our author irresistibly reminds us of the easy-going Frenchman who, on being told that a theory he had conceived was exceedingly beautiful, but was unfortunately disproved by all ascertained facts, remarked with a shrug of the shoulders, "Then so much the worse for the facts."

But let us adopt a more charitable interpretation of Mr. Baker's special pleading. Let us assume that his faith in the Garrick period is due less to a want of candour than a want of information, that he was compelled to write upon the subject before he could read it up. For this assumption there is more than sufficient room. The blunders he makes are simply astonishing. Captain Hill, he tells us, was acquitted by the House of Lords of the murder of Mountford. Captain Hill was never brought to trial at all, and in any case could not have been tried by the Upper House. The first appearance of a woman on the stage was at the theatre in Vere Street, not at the Red Bull. Colley Cibber did not die in Berkeley Square, and was not buried in Westminster Abbey. Garrick did not wear in *Othello* the "scarlet uniform of an officer," but an oriental dress. Many similar errors might be noticed. Another defect in Mr. Baker's book is a want of just historical proportion. "Perdita," for example, did not take a very prominent place in her profession, but on account of her relations with the Prince of Wales more space is devoted to her than to other players of far higher rank. It remains to be added that Mr. Baker frequently expresses himself in the language of the streets. Horace Walpole he describes as "a superfine snob." "Pea-green Hayne," the faithless lover of Miss Foote, was a "horsey, silly cad." Mrs. Cox, the woman whose name was associated with that of Edmund Kean with such unfortunate results, is called "Mrs. Potiphar." But for the art which Miss Fanny Kemble contemns, her family "might have been a generation of barbers." Nowadays, "actors are but dull dogs;" and a small practical joke of Liston's draws a sigh from Mr. Baker as to the "dulness of this priggish age." Instances of such bad taste on his part might be multiplied *ad nauseam*. Nor can the book be regarded as a model of composition, even as regards grammar. Here are edifying sentences:—"The next name in Cibber's list is Mountfort, *whom*, &c." "On the day he left London to fulfil some engagement, Scott called at his house and invited him to dine with him and Byron at Long's, and proposed to be the companion of his journey to Warwick and Kenilworth, which he then greatly

desired to see." Though reluctant to "enter the arena of contemporary criticism," Mr. Baker has a chapter on the stage of the present day, "heartily admitting that we have still a few good actors," but maintaining that the legitimate drama is "dead." Mr. Baker seems to be a rising writer of some industry, and it may therefore be hoped that by the time he next presents himself to the public he will master the subject he takes up, divest himself of ignorant prejudices, and study the laws of literary composition.

THE PORTRAITS IN *HAMLET*.

IN a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Irving defends one of the most remarkable of the innovations he has introduced in *Hamlet*, that of pointing the contrast between the prince's father and uncle without the aid of material portraits. It may be reasonably urged, he says, that "there is a striking evidence in the text itself that this portrayal of the two brothers was a purely imaginative operation. The phrase 'Look you here—what follows' surely indicates a chain of argument which Hamlet is about to set forth. If the pictures are to be in full view of the audience they must be placed on the further wall of the chamber, and the actor in describing them must face them, and so turn his back upon the spectators, whose attention will thus be distracted from Hamlet's words. If they be placed at the side or on opposite sides, they can be but partially seen, and then not by the entire house. It should never be forgotten that *the stage has four walls*, though the fourth is only theoretical, and it is in every sense advantageous that the audience should be left to imagine, if they like, either that the pictures are on this fourth wall, or that Hamlet is painting them from his imagination. Whichever view be adopted, the result then is that the mind is concentrated upon the impressive language of the poet, instead of being diverted from it by some mechanical device. The notoriously hazardous character of stage portraits, especially in these realistic days, disposes me," Mr. Irving adds, "to contend that my method satisfies the requirements of the situation. Signor Salvini, one of the most accomplished of actors, on seeing my method, paid me the compliment of adopting it in preference to that which he had originally practised."

It may not be amiss here to notice how this question was treated in bygone times. No account of what Burbage and Taylor did in the scene has come down to us, but as tapestry was used on the stage in Shakspeare's time, it is permissible to suppose that two figures thereon were indicated. Betterton, accepting a tradition

arising out of some performances of the tragedy just before the Civil War, had recourse to two miniatures; though, as Davies remarks, it is difficult to conceive how the graceful attitude of a man can be made apparent by such means. In course of time, as the text came to be studied, it was perceived that the pictures should be whole-lengths. The words,—

A station like the herald Mercury,
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,—

were rightly quoted in support of that view, and it is hardly probable that Hamlet would have in his pocket a portrait of his father's murderer. Half-length portraits were at one time used, but the same objection applies to them as to the medallions. Eventually whole-length portraits were adopted by Mr. Macready; and now, going much further along the path of innovation, Mr. Irving holds that Hamlet and the Queen should see the counterfeit presentments with the "mind's eye" only.

In this we think he is wrong. The idea is undoubtedly poetical and artistic; but that Shakspeare had material pictures in his mind when he wrote the scene appears beyond question. As Mr. Marshall points out in his *Study of Hamlet*, the first line—

Look here upon this picture and on this—

is strong evidence in favour of that theory. If the portrait existed only in Hamlet's imagination what sense is there in his using the two demonstrative pronouns? How could he point out any contrast between two portraits which he had not yet drawn? The word counterfeit is always used by Shakspeare as of some actual imitation.

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Has come so near creation?

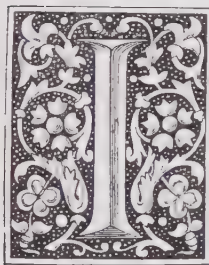
The "contrast" loses much of its effect on Gertrude's mind if the portraits are not visible. In the first instance, a sense of shame is aroused in her on merely physical grounds; and it is only when the idol she has set up before her is broken that Hamlet denounces his uncle's crimes. The Queen is clearly destitute of imaginative power; why, then, should Hamlet appeal to faculties which do not exist in her? Other arguments against Mr. Irving's theory might be advanced. His influence over his audience is great enough to make them accept any innovation at his hands with respect; but we question whether the closet scene would not produce an even greater effect than it does if, in accordance with an Elizabethan custom, the portraits were set in the wainscot, behind curtains.

The Theatre.

MAY 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

A GERMAN VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE.



It is we know considered to be useful, and it is undeniably entertaining, to see ourselves as others see us; and as with individuals so with nations—it is well that we should occasionally study the looking-glass provided for us in the opinions of our neighbours. The reflection thus obtained will, it is true, not unfrequently be distorted, sometimes by the malice, but more often by the ignorance of those whom we consult; but for such errors as these we can easily allow. The chief danger, indeed, is that the consciousness of superior knowledge should induce us to allow too much, and that we should impute to the blunders of our outspoken critics the unfavourable estimate which is in reality due to our own shortcomings. It is so much easier to exclaim, “Poor fellow, what can he be expected to know about such subjects!” or to ask with pitying superiority, “What can you expect from a prejudiced foreigner?” than to conscientiously inquire whether the unfriendly commentator be not either wholly or in part correct.

The temptation to ignore with calm contempt such an attack as that recently made upon the English stage in an influential German paper is it must be confessed considerable, so superficial is the writer’s knowledge of his subject, and so obviously does he set out with the determination to ignore all that is good and to emphasize all that is bad in our contemporary drama. It is surely only ignorance of the inner life of the stage which can induce a bystander to aver that our actors “are living in a state of chronic discontent and

embitterment against the public, the playwrights, and the managers, but more particularly against the last-mentioned class." The managers are charged "with not understanding the state of affairs, with a want of the spirit of enterprise, and with niggardly, stingy dealing, while the playwrights are charged with a total want of capacity." Where Hans Essen, the writer of the letter to which we allude, gained his conception of the actor's attitude towards his employers, and towards others with whom he associates in his profession, we are not informed; but appearances would seem to indicate that he has been listening to the irresponsible grumbling of some heavy tragedian out of an engagement. The man who is "down upon his luck" generally has a hard word to say for those who do not appreciate his efforts and his labours for the moment, under the honest impression that the art or the business which no longer stands in need of his services is going to the dogs. But few listeners place any great reliance upon an opinion so obviously based upon the narrowest personal foundation. The managers, Herr Essen tells us, take an extremely low view of the intelligence and the taste of the public for which they cater, whilst the public is utterly dissatisfied with the theatrical fare provided for its delectation. In fact, according to this sensational letter-writer, managers, actors, authors, and playgoers are all so completely out of sympathy one with another that our only wonder is to see any theatre kept open at all. It is possible that our German friend has in this hasty view of the stage been misled by the medium through which he has obtained what he would call his insight into the relationship existing in England, and more especially in London, between those who work for theatres; but no such excuse can be made for his statement, that most of our metropolitan theatres have been doing badly, though not worse than he seems to think they deserved. He might easily have ascertained that the Lyceum, the Prince of Wales's, and the Court—all of which houses he specifically names as failing to achieve "thorough success"—are now, and were when he wrote, exceedingly prosperous in their productions. These are matters of fact, and not of mere opinion.

That Herr Essen should appreciate Mr. W. S. Gilbert's *Gretchen* was not, of course, to be expected, nor can we blame him for his harsh verdict upon our dramatist's treatment of Goethe's masterpiece. Moreover there is much justice in his complaint that our most successful new plays nowadays are adaptations, more or less unsatisfactory, from the French. But in blaming wholesale the work done of late by our playwrights the critic either forgets or ignores the fact, that though the most recent efforts made by Mr. Wills, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Byron, Mr. Albery, and their *confrères* do

not chance to have been particularly successful, their comparative failure is not by any means characteristic of these writers. All have scored triumphs for worthy labours in the past, and all will doubtless do so in a future not far distant. The percentage of their mistakes is by no means greater than that of the mistakes made by the dramatists of other ages or of other countries, and it is ludicrously unfair to select a hopeless *fiasco* as typical of the "new and original comedy" of the day in England.

But if we can afford to hug ourselves with the belief that many of Herr Essen's strictures upon the intellectual degradation of our drama are for the most part undeserved, and are exaggerated either with a view to sensational effect or in consequence of imperfect acquaintance with the subject in hand, we have to confess with shame that one at least of the counts in his heavy indictment is wholly justified. The abomination which has been too happily characterised as the exhibition on the stage of "Phrynes in Frills" deserves every drop of the vial of scorn emptied upon it by its disgusted critic. The subject is one to which we have already had painful occasion to allude, and, loathsome as it is, no good purpose can be served by pretending to ignore it. So long as the matter is not taken in hand by some society for the protection of children or for the suppression of vice, the enormity must continue to be periodically exposed by those who have at heart the best interests alike of actors and audiences. The evil is surely a crying one if ever outraged manliness and purity and propriety cried aloud for redress, and we cannot wonder that a foreigner who has doubtless heard many boastings of our superiority in public morality over our Continental neighbours should expose the hideous offence which is thus openly tolerated in our midst. Late in the day though it be to remove the bad impression of our theatrical morality which has been created by such disgraceful proceedings, it is not too late for actors and actresses with characters to lose to mark their sense of the affront which they are asked to accept. It is not too late to test the effect of a formal protest against their degradation, and it is not too late to follow up a protest which many must have mentally registered by a resort to more active measures for righting themselves in the estimation of the public.

A MIRACLE PLAY IN AMERICA.

THE intelligence that a Passion Play has been performed at the Opera House in San Francisco reads like a message from another world. The Ober-Ammergau Mystery, it is true, must be

numbered with existing institutions, and dramas based upon Scriptural stories have appeared within the last few years in the far West. These pieces, however, have been represented before rude and unlettered audiences, and until now we have scarcely had a chance of estimating what effect the production of a Passion Play in the midst of a civilized community would have. The San Francisco manager appears to have made every effort to render the spectacle as solemnly impressive as possible. His play is divided into six scenes; the Presentation in the Temple, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Death of John the Baptist, the Brook of Kedron, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Gabbatha. In the first, which is ushered in with Bach's Passion music, we have an altar and a high-priest; a large chorus of male voices; troupes of acolytes swinging censers, a chorus of mothers bearing their babes in their arms. In the dramatis personæ the Jewish type prevails and is strongly marked. From the opening of the act where the babes are brought one after another to the high-priest, until the appearance of the Virgin and the Divine Child calls forth the prophecy and creates subsequent consternation, the choruses sustain the dignity of the score. The act-drop is a distant view of Calvary, with the three crosses in relief against a lurid sky, and a flight of angels brightening the sombreness of the picture. The second scene is a wild gorge in the desolate mountains of Judea. The dignity and grace of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin—the latter especially being fairer to look upon than the majority of the pictures of the Madonna; the music with its ominous refrain that mingles at last with the agony and despair of the slaughter; the sudden appearance of the pursued and the pursuers; the flight of the holy ones, and the grouping as the curtain descends, make up a fine series of pictures. In "the Death of John the Baptist," Herod is prevailed upon to render up the head of John the Baptist. The daughter of Herodias and her attendants dance before the throne; baby harpers sit upon each hand; a multitude of retainers gather to feast their eyes upon the sensuous beauty of Salome. It reminds us of the sabre dance at Jericho; we miss only the musical clash of the small cymbals upon the finger and, thrown out at intervals, the piercing scream of the impassioned dancers. With the third scene, the crucial test comes. The curtain rises upon umbrageous groves, green pastures, and still waters. In the foreground is a group of silent figures, one of them with a halo about the head. Christ is teaching his apostles, and the lesson is one of wisdom and love. The concluding scenes are represented with care and earnestness. The audience, of course, included persons of widely different temperaments, but according to the San Francisco *Chronicle* the impression created by the play

was so deep that a little tendency to levity was soon frowned down.

If it were not for the splendour with which the Passion play has been put on the stage the foregoing record would read like a page of mediæval history. In substance, indeed, the piece bears a close resemblance to the Miracles which helped to pave the way for the introduction in western Europe of the regular drama. From as early a period as the ninth century, it would appear, the Roman Catholic clergy, as a means of diffusing religious sentiment and knowledge among the people, gave dramatic representations in churches of events chronicled in Holy Writ. These representations proved extremely popular; they brought home to the minds of men the objects of their gravest and most constant meditation, and probably had a more lasting effect than any of the modern religious revivals. In course of time the clergy perceived they had made what from their point of view was a serious error. The religious plays generated and nursed a spirit of inquiry which could not but prove fatal to some of the pretensions of the Church. The result was that early in the thirteenth century the performance of such pieces in sacred edifices was interdicted. But the Mystery and the Miracle, as the Old Testament play and the New Testament play were respectively called, did not expire with the withdrawal of clerical patronage. They were revived in the market place, and in more than one instance were actually housed. The most sacred personages were introduced in them. God was sung by a trio; a priest impersonated Christ. During the performance the audience wore an extremely devout air, even when the entry of our Saviour into Jerusalem on an ass was represented. The religious plays were frequently coarse as well as blasphemous, and the awe which they evidently inspired in those who saw them is accounted for by the deplorable ignorance of the masses and the consequent dulness of their sense of the incongruous. The Mystery and the Miracle lost their hold of western Europe through the Renaissance, but even now they may be found in something like their primitive aspect in semi-barbarous countries. The Passion Play at San Francisco is really the old Miracle without its coarseness and profanity, and apparently represents an attempt to ascertain whether the religious drama, treated in a right spirit, can be cultivated in cities and towns with any prospect of success.

The fact that a Miracle has been soberly received by our somewhat cynical friends on the other side of the Atlantic may lead to a revival of the project announced some months ago, but soon afterwards abandoned—namely, that of producing such a piece in London. It is not improbable that Mr. Hollingshead, actuated by

religious fervour and a desire to put money in his purse, will make the experiment at the Gaiety. For many reasons it is to be hoped that no English manager will commit himself to so questionable an undertaking. The production of a religious play in this country could do no good, and might do much harm. The Mystery and the Miracle have been deprived of their *raison d'être* by the spread of education, the general circulation of the Bible, and the work of the clergy and kindred agencies. The cause of religious progress does not stand in need of assistance from the stage. In all probability, too, that cause would be materially retarded by the introduction of Passion plays. The spirit of scepticism is abroad, and such performances would often inspire irreverent mirth rather than graver sentiments. Religion has already enough to endure in the way of ridicule through the errors and eccentricities of her votaries. The devout would regard a Miracle play as a profanation, and would be alienated from the theatre at the very moment when they are rising superior to unfounded prejudices respecting it. That many persons would be led by curiosity to patronize the religious drama there can be no doubt, but the number would be hardly large enough to cover the great expense which the production of the simplest would necessarily entail,—a view confirmed by the significant fact that in San Francisco the Passion Play has put the manager to a considerable loss.

THE SHAKSPERE MEMORIAL.

THE ingeniously-devised “memorial” by which the name of Shakspeare is to be honoured to the advantage of the worthy people of Stratford-on-Avon is now a *fait accompli* so far as the “inauguration” of a new theatre for the little town is concerned. After a good deal of fuss had been made about the scheme some year or two ago it had been well-nigh forgotten by all save those locally interested in its success, until a short time since the programme of an “inaugural festival” for the new theatre was published. It was then seen at once that the worst predictions of those who considered the whole project a mistake were to be realized. Without exception the dramatic entertainments promised on this occasion were of a common-place if not positively inadequate order; and the representations of Shakspeare’s works resembled a series of third-rate “benefit” performances. Appropriately enough the play chosen for the opening night was *Much Ado about Nothing*; but the necessary difficulties in the way of attracting to Stratford-on-Avon the best or even the second-best representatives of the

principal rôles robbed the performance of all intrinsic value. We do not wish to underrate such stage services as are or have in past years been rendered by some of the players engaged; we are willing to admit that a certain amount of curiosity might be aroused concerning some of the *tours de force* attempted. But to pronounce the programme prepared by the committee illustrative of the contemporary estimation in which Shakspeare's works are held, or of the worthiest treatment now received by them upon the stage, would be to miss the distinction between reasonable competence and pretentious inadequacy. As was remarked by one of our contemporaries in a contemptuous reference to the coming event, the affair had "dwindled down to the proportions of an enterprising local festival;" and it must have been felt by its promoters that they had undertaken a task beyond their powers.

The mistake of the Stratford Memorial builders has lain, as we took occasion to point out two years ago in these pages, in striving to give national importance and significance to a purely local undertaking. It is well no doubt that a town of 10,000 inhabitants should have a theatre, though little can be said for its love of the drama when it has been content to remain so long without one. But it is not well that subscriptions should have been asked all over the country for a memorial of Shakspeare which means nothing except to the inhabitants of Stratford-on-Avon and its neighbourhood. A new theatre erected by national subscription in the intellectual centre of the country and devoted to the higher development of the national drama might have signified much. Every Englishman of education is attracted more or less to London, and the tendency of the time is ever towards centralization in art, in literature, and in commerce. A new theatre in a small country town signifies nothing at all except for those who *faute de mieux* would be attracted by the typical "inaugural festival" arranged at Stratford for the 23rd April 1879.

The mountains, or rather the very small hills, have been in labour, and it is impossible to help being struck by the absurdity of the mouse which has appeared. But whilst we smile at the promise of an allotment of good seats to London applicants by the "Strangers' Committee"—the strangers being, we presume, those admirers of Shakspeare who have not the advantage of living in Warwickshire, and whilst we laugh outright at the elaborate burlesque of national respect for a great memory, we cannot avoid a sigh of regret for a wasted opportunity. Stratford might have been welcome to its memorial museum and library, though even these would have been better placed where they would be more accessible to the majority of Shakspearean students. But why not have founded in

the metropolis that endowed school of dramatic art which is on all sides recognised as a national want? All memorials to men of transcendent genius whose works can never be forgotten are unnecessary so far as their professed object is concerned. Such a man has indeed reared for himself a *monumentum ære perennius*; and any further monument which is to be raised must in a certain sense be redundant. But care should at least be taken by any whose gratitude prompts them to undertake the work of supererogation that the scale of their efforts is commensurate with the ambition of their object. Can it be imagined that the poet who sought in London the sphere for his intellectual life stands in need of a "memorial" which takes the shape of an addition to the list of petty provincial theatres? Should not his name have been associated rather with the advance of the art to which he was devoted than with the insignificant interests of the town which chanced to give him birth? If it be objected that it is practically impossible to devise any memorial which shall fulfil the requirements of the case, it can only be urged in reply that a memorial less adequate to the occasion than that of last month can scarcely be conceived. Had Stratford-on-Avon been satisfied with preserving its relics of the dramatist's birthplace, and with doing honour to his memory by its own exertions and to the best of its own ability, its efforts, modest as they would necessarily have been, would at least have commanded respect. But when, with ill-advised boldness, it attempts to conjure with the great name of its dead townsman, and to manipulate our national pride in Shakspeare to its own advantage and self-glorification, it commits a blunder not only provocative of laughter, but deserving of reprobation.



THE THEATRE NO 10 NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Yours Sincerely
Ada Hucobough

Portraits.

XIX.—MISS SWANBOROUGH.

ONE night in the autumn of 1861 a good deal of excitement and bustle might have been observed behind the scenes at the Strand Theatre, then, as now, the recognised home of burlesque and domestic drama. Not quite sixteen years of age, Miss Ada Swanborough, the youngest daughter of the lessee, was about to appear for the first time before a London audience. But for a few nights' probation at Brighton she would have been entirely new to the stage. The piece chosen for the momentous occasion was entitled *Is it the King?* and was an adaptation by Mr. Greenwood of a play brought out in Paris some time previously. The story, it must be confessed, was wildly improbable, but after the way in which French dramatists have treated the Lord Mayor of London we have no reason to be surprised if they make free with facts in connection with other countries. Ignoring the existence of the Semiramis of the North, the author assumes that the Salic law, by which females are excluded from the privileges of sovereignty, is in force in Denmark. Though no one suspects the truth, King Christian, the character impersonated by the *débutante*, really belongs to the softer sex, and has been brought up as a man in order that a naughty brother may not sway the sceptre. The Duchess of Oldenburg, a pretender to the Danish throne, has the aforesaid law repealed, and then, to her unutterable confusion, is made aware, in common with everybody else, that Christian is a woman. The latter, it may be added, bestows her hand upon an attendant for whom she has nourished a romantic passion, and who has been not a little astonished by his royal master's aversion from manly sports and exercises. The playbill did not inform us under which Christian of Denmark these events occurred. Miss Swanborough's performance, while betraying inexperience of the stage, was far from ineffective, and the critics unanimously declared that a young actress of great promise had appeared. "Miss Swanborough," Mr. Oxenford wrote in *The Times*, "is very young, and is evidently a novice in her profession; but to the advantages of an extremely pleasing person she adds the qualifications of general intelligence and unexceptionably good taste. Rarely do we see a more agreeable figure than that of the pretty blonde damsel in the second act, who looks almost childishly innocent, and sings a pretty song, certainly with a small voice, but in a manner most unaffected." Miss Swanborough soon afterwards

devoted herself to a branch of art with which her name was long to be identified—burlesque. Mrs. Bancroft, Mr. Honey, Miss Lydia Thompson, Mr. John Clarke, Mr. Fenton, Mr. Thorne, and Mr. James successively joined the Strand company, and it is a striking proof of the young actress's powers that while playing in a piece with even the most gifted of these players she never receded into the background. The timidity of a beginner having been conquered, her acting quickly became remarkable for vivacity and a keen appreciation of broad humour, and her voice seemed to gain in strength and flexibility as time passed on. Mr. Byron said that she "was a swan" from whom any actress might "borrow" beauty, grace, and tuneful notes." Many pleasant memories, we are sure, will be awakened by even a list of some of the characters she represented—Eurydice, Abdallah, Haroun Alraschid, Lord Mont-eagle, Lady Constance de Grey, William Tell, Mabel Lynwood, Penelope, Aladdin, the Lady Rowena, Hardress Cregan, Agnes in *Der Freischutz*, and Sweet William in *Puss in Boots*. Nine or ten years ago, her voice having been incurably impaired by a cold, Miss Swanborough abandoned burlesque and addressed herself to comedy. Her proficiency in this direction had been foreshadowed by her impersonations of Annie in *Milky White* and Marian Block in *Neighbours*, and the thoroughness with which she entered into the spirit of the character of Alexina in James Sheridan Knowles's posthumous play showed that it would not be difficult for her to signalize herself in the interpretation of romantic drama. "In this character," the *Standard* said, "Miss Swanborough achieved complete success. It is one which requires no ordinary powers, for the conflicting emotions which rule the heroine are difficult of interpretation. The passionate love and the kindly human heart, the patient watching of the assassin's designs, the light bantering tone which sets at rest their suspicions, the wild despair that the approach of death induced, and the heroism that at length calmly met it,—were represented with consummate skill." The playgoing public know Miss Swanborough as one of our principal actresses in comedy, and her title to this distinction will hardly be denied by those who have seen her Miss M'Tavish in *Old Soldiers*, her Miss Tremaine in *Old Sailors*, her Helen Gaythorne in *Weak Woman*, her Mrs. Sutherland in *A Lesson for Love*, her Countess of Tressilian in *The Dowager*, her Lady Crawford in *Our Club*, and her Mrs. Percy Lennox in *Family Ties*. The secret of her success seems to lie in a thorough appreciation of the character she represents, the mingled force and delicacy with which she embodies a conception, and a certain charm of manner entirely her own. Her dramatic feeling is at times exuberant, but, as a rule, is kept within artistic bounds.

The Round Table.

CAUSES OF FAILURE.

BY HENRY J. BYRON.

A MANAGER'S failure and an author's are not quite the same thing. They are in the long run (or rather, the *short* "run") so far as their joint interests are concerned; but whereas the manager only looks at results the author frequently refuses to consider the verdict of the public, or the dictum of the theatre director, as just or conclusive. For failure is sometimes the result of other causes than the inherent weakness or general defects of a play. Circumstances of production, locality, casts of characters, and other influences often affect injuriously dramas of decided merit deserving a better fate than they receive, and which under other conditions might ripen into popularity, even if the initial performance seemed somewhat unpromising. A failure frequently occurs through the shortsightedness or cupidity of a manager and the conceit of an author—the result being, production of a piece at "the wrong house." Driven into a corner for a novelty, or anxious not to let an apparently promising play slip through his fingers, a manager sometimes produces a work utterly unsuited to his theatre, whilst the author in overweening belief in his composition *anywhere* consents to or even jumps at the proposal. The result is nearly always the same. However well the play may be performed its production is an insult to the *genius loci*; the square peg is in the round hole, and the upshot is failure. The manager refuses to see this is what was sure to be and blames the author; the author probably blames everybody but himself.

Sometimes a failure is the result of an injudicious cast, and here again manager and author have equally to thank themselves. The manager objects perhaps to alter or add to his company, the author accepts the artists as they stand and still hopes his work may succeed, notwithstanding the utter unfitness of two or three principal actors for the characters assigned them. Square peg and round hole again—result almost inevitably something between a fiasco and that objectionable tepid triumph a *succès d'estime*. There was some time back a fatal tendency towards imitation

growing up amongst managers, but common sense and repeated failure have pretty well disposed of this suicidal policy. If one theatre produced a successful play of eccentric type, one or two more, regardless of the old reputation of their theatres, produced something like it, instead of remaining true to their speciality. Thus many pieces of decided merit helped to swell the list of failures, and this by no means through inefficiency on their authors' part.

Occasionally we see a piece which has apparently every element of attraction, which is welcomed on the first night, praised by the press, and applauded by the public, die out of the programme in a few weeks, and we are at a loss to account for it. Presently, looking at said programme, we discover the reason. The piece is played at a quarter past seven, and the major portion of the audience commence dinner about the time it concludes. Again, the *pièce de résistance* catches the late diners capitally, but keeps the remainder of the audience too late. Probably a striking "effect" comes towards the close, and is exhibited to a coat-donning and wrap-collecting crowd afraid of missing their omnibus or last train. In many provincial towns this is remarkable. In Manchester, for instance, after a certain hour the concentrated dramatic talent of the age would not keep the mass of the audience in their places. Another mistake conducive to failure is the injudicious overcrowding of the cheaper portions of the theatre. There is no greater unkindness to the *habitués* of the gallery—by no means the least generous or appreciative amongst the audience—than to permit them to pour in indiscriminately until they are packed like sardines. Uneasy, overheated, and in awkward corners, half-stifled and unable to see "what's going on," a dozen or so malcontents can destroy the comfort of the entire audience, annoy the actors, and without malice prepense sometimes destroy, or at all events peril, the safety of a worthy play.

Very long "waits" between the acts have before now utterly destroyed all chances of a piece, and it is an undoubted though inexplicable fact that, if *one* absurd mistake or *mal-à-propos* accident in "business" or dialogue happens to occur early in the play on its first performance, others are certain to follow. The experience of every habitual playgoer will confirm this statement, and numerous instances will no doubt rise to the recollection of the reader.

An unfortunate incident or a speech in bad taste at the conclusion of a play, up to the point in question a decided success, has often turned, as if by magic, the friendly feeling of the hitherto pleased audience to one of great annoyance or disgust, and at once

ruins the play. A clever play by the late Mr. Chorley (*I think*) called *Duchess Eleanor*, with Miss Cushman in the principal part,—and how magnificently she played it!—was hooted just before its conclusion, and was only repeated one night. At the touch of the assassin a corpse was supposed to bleed afresh, but this was too horrible for the audience and damned the drama. It will be in the memory of many that *The Octoroon*, on its production at the Adelphi, was a veritable triumph until the painful business with the lovers in the last act. The audience hissed furiously, and Mr. Boucicault wrote to the papers complaining of political feeling regarding “North” and “South.” The audience didn’t care twopence about “North” or “South”; they hissed because they didn’t like to see a girl take poison from her lover. Shortly after the clever author finished the play differently with the happiest results. Sometimes even egregious errors may be wiped away with a stroke of the pen, and generally if a play possesses the true elements of popularity first night mistakes are forgotten and success follows. *But not always.*

There is an old saying that has with some people passed into a truism, that a piece which pleases the actors is very likely if not certain to fail with the public. A long experience teaches me that this is altogether absurd. There are no better judges of a play than actors. But what you have to do is to *get at* their judgment—a judgment unwarped by personal considerations, a purely unselfish opinion. Unfortunately the calling of the actor is essentially a selfish one—everyone wishes (naturally) to be the “cock salmon,” as the late William Farren described himself, and an actor who has a bad part thinks less of the piece than he who has a good one. But so far from a favourable opinion on the part of the artists engaged being inimical to the chances of a play’s success, common sense will suggest to everybody that a company in a good temper and believing in the material they have to work upon *must* throw themselves more heartily into their work and consequently help to the desired result than a troupe dissatisfied and disappointed. As to the power of the press to make or mar a play I hold it of little consequence. When a failure is bound to *be* one all the praise in the world will do no good, and on the other hand no abuse can kill a piece which hits the fancy of the multitude. BUT—when a play is metaphorically going down the hill a kick from the critics will settle it for ever, whilst a clever piece trembling in the balance may owe nearly all its ultimate success to the kindly encouragement of the press.

“First night” failure may mean much, or it may mean nothing. As I have indicated it may have been the mere result

of mischance. *The Rivals* we all know was a first-night failure. There are now few more popular plays. *The Lady of Lyons* was received so strangely that the company were called together to rehearse another piece. Mr. Bartley, however, saw the certainty of success in it, and strongly urged Mr. Macready to continue its performance. Probably, as Bartley played Damas, a fine part, his advice was not altogether disinterested, but his judgment was sound, as was proved very shortly by the universal popularity of the play. Instances by the score might be cited, but I fear I am trespassing beyond the space permissible in the pages of so varied a magazine as THE THEATRE. My object has been to show that failure is not necessarily all the author's, though he, as a rule, has to bear the brunt of public opinion in the matter. If he is a foolish man he dwells on his misfortune, "grizzles" over his grievance, bores his friends with explanatory comments, and considers himself hurt if he receives scant sympathy; if, on the other hand, he is a wise one, he accepts his fate, holds his tongue, pockets his feelings, and goes to work again with a will.

MRS. FANNY KEMBLE AND THE STAGE.

BY AN ACTOR.

THE Kemble family were distinguished by eccentricity as well as by talent, but their eccentricity never led them to revile the profession by which they lived, and by means of which Sarah Siddons raised herself from the condition of a lady's-maid to that of one of the most honoured women in the country. For that profession, indeed, they manifested the highest regard; and it has been reserved for the daughter of Charles Kemble to speak in a sneering manner of the genius with which her race was endowed.

It has never been considered a sign of great elevation of mind for a man to speak ill of the calling in which he has won fame and fortune. His doing so may be taken as a sure indication either of pure snobbishness or of a peculiar defect of temper deserving compassion rather than rebuke. It is very much to be regretted that Mr. Macready should have given countenance to the prejudice of a certain class of persons against the theatrical profession by declaring that it was a vocation which no man of well-regulated mind would adopt. This sentiment was peculiarly ungracious as expressed by a man who owed everything to the stage; who if he had pursued another walk in life would probably have died in

comparative obscurity, and who unquestionably was of infinitely greater value to the world in the career he professed to condemn than he could possibly have been in any other sphere. But Mr. Macready was of such an unhappy nature that it is difficult to say that this complaint about his art did not escape him in one of those moments of unreasoning violence for which in his autobiography he does such bitter penance. At all events, it is fair to assert that had *he* been a man of well-regulated mind he would not have tried to throw a blight, as it were, on his own laurels, by endeavouring to discredit the endowments by which they were won. A somewhat different, but much more flagrant, instance of this perversity is to be found in Mrs. Fanny Kemble's *Recollections of a Girlhood*. This book has delighted many readers—and justly, for in the main it is distinguished by a higher tone than usually marks theatrical reminiscences. But there is in it a vein of discontent and reproach very far from edifying. Remembering who Mrs. Fanny Kemble was, one is at a loss to imagine how anybody bearing such a name could thus describe the actor's life: "A business which is incessant excitement and factitious emotion seems to me unworthy of a man; a business which is public exhibition, unworthy of a woman."

There is a deliberation in this language which makes it clear that the writer was not actuated by mere impulse. Yet it is scarcely credible that she was unconscious at the time that this was a serious indictment against her own family, a protest against the honour of the Kembles, and a repudiation, one might almost say, of her own claims to public esteem. For is it likely that had it not been for the magical name of Kemble, a young girl wholly without experience, ignorant, as Mr. Macready said, of the rudiments of her art, would have taken the town by that appearance as Juliet which excited so much public interest, and is so well described in these *Recollections*? Is it probable that but for the reflected glory of an unsurpassed reputation which she had done nothing to make Mrs. Fanny Kemble would ever have been known as an actress, or have written this book? This, however, is a minor consideration. What strikes one most painfully is that the character, the spotless fame of the greatest actress of the British stage, should be arraigned by one who is a Kemble, and a woman. For that is what it means. The acting of Sarah Siddons was a "public exhibition"; therefore, according to Mrs. Fanny Kemble's theory, she was degraded. If we are amazed at the accusation, we must be thunderstruck at the accuser. If it was "unworthy" of Mrs. Siddons to make for herself a great and enduring fame, what shall we say is worthy of one whose chief claim to our consideration is

her tie of kindred with that remarkable woman whom by implication she discredits ?

It is well for Fanny Kemble's reputation that we should assign her prejudice against the stage to the same category as Macready's. Both were the outcome of diseased temper. Mrs. Fanny Kemble's nature aptly illustrated Hamlet's remark that "there's nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so." Morbid musings over her own faded dreams have so distorted her mental vision that in the profession which had made her family illustrious and redeemed herself from oblivion she saw nothing but humiliation. But let us see how far her assertions will stand the test of argument. "A business which is incessant excitement and factitious emotion seems to me unworthy of a man." Is acting the only art to which this description can be applied? Take novel-writing. If the novelist be industrious, his imaginative excitement must be "incessant"; and as for his emotion, seeing that it is caused by the joys and sorrows of unreal personages, by the accidental inspirations of fancy, it might by a harsh realist be called "factitious." But what would have been the feelings of Dickens if some one had told him that the grief he felt when he described the death of Paul Dombey was "unworthy of a man"? Is the fount of sympathy to be forbidden to flow at the will of imagination on penalty of being so misrepresented? Or let us take the poet. It will scarcely be affirmed that the operations of Shakspeare's genius must have been of such an abstractedly metaphysical character that the springs of his soul were untouched by the pathos of his own creations. If his sensibilities were deeply affected by the anguish of Lear over the dead Cordelia, who will have the hardihood to describe his emotion as "factitious"? If such expressions are an abuse of language when applied to the poet, they are not a whit more reasonable when levelled at the actor. That people of the highest intelligence constantly testify to the mental and moral profit they derive from a fine display of dramatic art is well known to everyone interested in the stage. To assert that a profession which, in its highest branch, is a never-failing source of the most refined enjoyment, and which, even in its lower aspects, often presents the most truthful pictures of many phases of human life, is unworthy either of a man or a woman, is simply to proclaim an irrational hostility to an art which above all others "holds the mirror up to Nature." To write about the "incessant excitement and factitious emotion" of the actor is mere childishness. If the actor can make the unreal teach the lessons of the real, if he can so transfuse his individuality into the characters he portrays as to impress upon our minds the great truths of life with all the force of

a living example, he renders to the world a service which happily has obtained better recognition from mankind than from Mrs. Fanny Kemble.

“NEW AND ORIGINAL.”

BY SAVILLE ROWE.

THE interesting discussion that has been raised and temperately argued in your columns as to the moral duties and responsibilities of a writer who has briefly and incisively to describe a play which, not being “original” in its incidents or “new” in its subject, has been treated so far in a fresh manner as to make it an injustice to management and public alike to call it an old play, or a translated play, or an adapted play, urges me to put before you the difficulties that attend the author who, with every possible desire to be candid, straightforward, and honest, is indicted for a literary crime, and lashed for a moral offence, by men who state under the shield of the anonymous what they would hesitate to write under their own names. I am unable to agree with that self-opinionated and arrogant criticism that calls public writers dishonest, and false, and mean, and destitute of honour, and uncandid, and heaven knows what, when they after careful reflection take a course—a candid course and an honourable course—with which their censors venture to disagree. Common honesty is not the special privilege of anonymous writers, and these hard words are not to be lightly bandied about and flung into the face of reputable men upon insufficient evidence, or in relation to a subject upon which there is so strong a divergence of opinion. The question has been started by you in your “Round Table.” Here are four eminent writers and honourable men who cannot agree upon one single moral point involved in it, and yet I find Mr. Gilbert calling men “impostors” and guilty of “frauds on the public” who do not happen to agree with him, and Mr. Moy Thomas laying down the law about “common honesty,” and untruthfulness, and “misleading acknowledgments,” as if honour and honesty were unknown quantities except in his own circle, and as if he were the specially appointed schoolmaster to correct his literary brethren on new points of morality. For my own part I resent such dictation, or such inferences, and I submit that I am quite as able of distinguishing between right and wrong, fraud or honesty, as the gentlemen who, not content with disagreeing with me on a point of admitted doubt, take me to task in this high-handed and supercilious manner.

If Mr. Moy Thomas, Mr. Gilbert, and their friends, will invent a new phraseology which will more conveniently fit in with their nice sense of honour perhaps we are likely to be on all fours on this question; and if they will take the further trouble of reading the original work, which we are told we have translated when we have done nothing of the kind, there will be more chance of agreement than there is at present. But so long as the English language remains as it presents itself to my limited comprehension I shall consider a play to be "new" that has not been presented to the public before in that form, and I shall refuse to consider myself a "dishonest man" or an "impostor" for holding to my opinion. Take a case in point. I am asked by a manager to do a "new" version of *Nos Intimes*, by Sardou. There are several versions, and I am asked to do another. The manager does not want the "old" versions, but a new one. I change the scene, the characters, the social plan (rightly or wrongly), I rewrite the dialogue, I try to conquer difficulties that have been felt in other arrangements of the same story; rightly or wrongly I venture to reconstruct, and I offer the result to the public. Am I a dishonest man and an impostor if I call this a new play and tell the public from whence I derived my material? It is a new song to an old tune. Not to call it a new play would be to ask the public to come and see what they had seen before. I am asking them to come and see what they have never seen before—my new version of an old story. If the management thought the old plays good enough they would use them. They don't; they want a new play. Such a new play was *Peril*.

I am asked to do a new version of *Le Village*, by Octave Feuillet. I change the scene. I ruin the play, according to the opinion of very eminent critics, amongst whom was the late Charles Mathews. I alter the life. I make the hero an old clergyman. I give new dialogue, and, rightly or wrongly, a new face on an old friend. Am I dishonest or an impostor because I call this a new play when it is not an old one? Am I to be dictated to by my schoolmaster critics, and told how I am to behave, because my notion of right and wrong does not happen to agree with theirs, and because I am anxious to do justice to the manager, to the public, and naturally to myself. There is nothing ambiguous or misleading in calling *The Vicarage* a new play when it is a new play. If Mrs. Bancroft had wanted an old play she would have revived the *Cosy Couple*.

Finally, I am asked to put a new complexion upon an old melodrama which I do not honestly and conscientiously believe has been ever read in the French by one out of the dozen who have dictated to me about my ignorance of honour and honesty. I am asked to

give a new version of old *Perrinet Leclerc*, about which the general public know nothing, and the reviewers less, according to their own confession. The original play is hopeless for the stage, and so, I may add, was our unfortunate version. Still I did my best for it. The play was reduced by one act, it was entirely reconstructed, scenes were written which were not suggested or hinted at by the original dramatist. In the original the Queen and her lover never meet, but we made them meet and talk as well. D'Armagnac, in our play, is a mixture of several characters. The last act of our play is finished after the model of the *Bouquetière des Innocents*. An attempt was made to elevate the diction by writing all the dramatic dialogues in blank verse, and in countless instances we departed from the original. Anxious—sensitively anxious not to offend our schoolmasters—to avoid those ruthless and ungenerous accusations about meanness and dishonesty and so on, we determined for once to be on the right side and to go out of our way to be unusually candid. I had a long conversation and discussion with my collaborateur. We decided to abandon the disputed words, “new” and “original,” altogether. We determined to have nothing to do with these stale old bones of contention. So knowing what we had done to *Perrinet Leclerc*, which our critics do not even to this moment, we called our version *The Crimson Cross*, an historical romance, written and arranged by Saville Rowe and E. Manuel. This was perfectly and absolutely true; Mr. Manuel arranged it and I wrote it. The romance ought to have been known by every student of history. We did more. We told the public every book we had consulted, and if we had been allowed more space on the programme we would have added every time the romance had been dramatized and at what theatre. There was no attempt at concealment. I submit that we were incapable of dishonesty or literary immorality. In fact we did more than we were obliged to do. We sent word-books of the play to our censors, and I myself told one of the critics, who has most bitterly and unjustifiably assailed me, the origin of our work and its whole history. He used that information to stab me—or rather to attempt to do so. But somehow or other—I cannot say why—some of the critics had got it into their heads that *The Crimson Cross* was an original play. It was never so announced. I never said so. No one implied it. But they determined it was original, and when they found they had made a mistake, they made the innocent authors suffer for their error. I appeal to every candid and unprejudiced mind whether any announcement of obligations has ever been so full or complete as ours. But that did not hinder attacks and insinuations such as any honourable man would resent if life were not overburdened with these injustices. The critic of the

Daily News implied that we had not acted in a "candid" manner, or attended to the "honourable custom of dramatists of reputation"; the critic of the *World* indulged in a roundabout and complicated sentence in order to accuse me of falsehood in a polite and gentlemanly manner, saying that "a truth had been suppressed and an untruth suggested"; the critic of the *Whitehall Review* considered I was "mean," which in itself is a gratuitous insult; and naturally these cuckoo cries were repeated by such as were eager enough to condemn but had not the common honesty to read *Perrinet Leclerc* in the French. One supercilious gentleman, having got it into his head that *The Crimson Cross* was an original play, shrugged his shoulders and said that it "only turned out to be our old friend *Perrinet Leclerc*," which has not been played in London since he was born, and has not been seen on the English stage by one living dramatic critic save Mr. E. L. Blanchard.

Now these are brave words and high-sounding accusations, and with characteristic generosity they have been sent across the Atlantic and communicated to American papers with further unjustifiable statements appended to them. But still I live, conscious of the honesty of my course, and incapable of the fraud that has been imputed to me. Such comments are easily penned by men who will not take the trouble to verify, but considering myself quite as incapable of dishonesty as the critic of the *Daily News*, of falsehood as the critic of the *World*, of meanness as the critic of the *Whitehall Review*, I shall continue to call a play new when it is not old, and to acknowledge fully, completely, and exhaustively my indebtedness to those authors from whom I have borrowed, as I have ever done, and as every honest man continually does, in spite of tall-talk and dictation. But when the dramatic schoolmaster is abroad and presumes to tell an author what his intention was when he wrote certain lines and arranged certain complications, and actually goes so far as to contradict an author's assertion on the evidence of the schoolmaster's reading of the author's text, it is not surprising that the one industrious man who has read *Perrinet Leclerc* should go blundering through a hedge and that his faithful companions should leap blindly after him. As for myself, I can conscientiously say that every assertion and movement in connection with the announcement of *The Crimson Cross* was in perfect good faith. The play failed, as doubtless it deserved to fail: it was honestly submitted and as honestly and heartily condemned, and I have told the story of its birth and parentage in as "plain language" as Mr. Moy Thomas can desire, who is so sensitively scrupulous about literary morality and so extremely grandiloquent on the subject

of "half confessions, and ingenuously misleading acknowledgments of obligations." Never before were grave charges made upon such manufactured evidence, or character so wilfully sacrificed for theory.

MADAME FAVART AND MARSHAL SAXE.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

THE heroine of the comic opera now being played at the Strand Theatre was one of the most delightful actresses of the eighteenth century, and seems to have divided the homage of Paris with Mdle. Quinault and Mdle. Dangeville. Marie Justine Benoîte Duronceray appeared at the Opéra Comique in 1744 as the "première danseuse of the king of Poland." This title had been conferred upon her by Stanislaus himself, to whose little court at Luneville her parents were attached as musicians, and who with characteristic good-nature defrayed the expenses of her education. Her success was immediate and decisive. Endowed with remarkable versatility, she played ingénues, soubrettes, grandes coquettes, and paysannes with equal effect. Her singing was pretty, her acting full of brightness and point. Bauran, the author of *La Servante Maîtresse*, wrote:—

Nature un jour épousa l'Art,
De leur amour naquit Favart,
Qui semble tenir de son père
Tout ce qu'elle doit à sa mère.

The verses composed in her praise would fill a tolerably large volume. Up to this time, it may be remarked in passing, paysannes and soubrettes had appeared on the stage in diamonds and powdered wigs and rich dresses; Madame Favart was courageous enough to dress all her characters appropriately, and the greatest tragic actress at the Comédie Française did not disdain to profit by the example thus set her. Before long, however, the good fortune of Mdle. Chantilly, as the new-comer called herself, temporarily deserted her. A young writer thought proper to indulge in a little pleasantry at the expense of the actresses in a piece brought out at the Opéra Comique, *La Chercheuse d'Esprit*. The angry dames swept to their revenge; the unfortunate young man, having been induced to enter the theatre by a message to the effect that they forgave his ill-humour in consideration of his wit, and would like him to come and write for them some couplets for a new piece, was pounced upon, bound hand and foot, and flagellated by his victims until they were compelled by sheer fatigue to give over. The other theatres, jealous of the success of the Opéra Comique, made the authorities believe that a disgraceful riot had occurred there, and in the result the

place was closed. Soon afterwards Mdlle. Chantilly espoused Charles Simon Favart, the author of most of the little pieces brought out at the Foire. The son of a wealthy pastrycook of literary tastes, he had been educated at the college of Louis-le-Grand, and had won the prize of the Jeux Floraux with a poem on the Maid of Orleans. No marriage could have been contracted under happier auspices than this; it was evidently one of affection on both sides, and of the esteem in which the vaudevillist and his wife were held in private life many pleasing proofs might be given.

In an evil hour the Favarts accepted an invitation from Marshal Saxe to assume the direction of the theatrical company which he took about with him during his campaigns. The hero of Fontenoy had from early life manifested a marked partiality for plays,—and for actresses. Twenty years or more before the time of which we speak he was the recognised lover of Adrienne Lecouvreur, who was foolish enough to sell her jewelry and plate in order to send him 40,000 livres when he needed men and money to defend his duchy of Courland against the power of Russia. If he did not repay her with constancy, she had no reason to be surprised, seeing that even the prospect of sharing the Russian throne with the niece of Peter the Great, the Duchess Anna Ivanovna, who had conceived an attachment for him, failed to endow him with that virtue. In his campaigns he was accompanied by a comic opera company; chiefly, no doubt, as a means of gratifying his love of mirth and women, but also, it should be said, as a matter of military system. The French, he said, never did so well as when they were led on gaily; what they most feared in war was weary inactivity. The enemy was equally inclined to be amused, and the company not unfrequently received permission to pass from the French to the opposite camp to play. This alternation of comedies and painfully real tragedies is not a little curious. The Marshal paid dearly for his pleasure; the jealousies and caprice of his histrionic mistresses, he once said, gave him more trouble than all the hussars of the Queen of Hungary. Sometimes it was in the theatre that he had to give the order of battle, and in such an event the principal actress would come forward and say, “Messieurs, to-morrow there will be no play, as the Marshal gives battle; after to-morrow, *Le Coq du Village*.”

Madame Favart had not been in the camp many days when the Marshal became desperately enamoured of her. His chief actress, the Beaumenard, was very well in her way, but was altogether eclipsed by the new-comer. So, serenely indifferent to both the

proximity and feelings of the husband, a poor devil of a vaudevillist, the gallant Marshal attempted to seduce her. But this time the conqueror of so many beauties encountered a resistance as resolute as it was unusual. Madame was proof against his pleadings, his gilded promises, and even his threats. Her firmness, of course, served only to increase his passion; and at length, apprehensive of the worst, she contrived, although a watch had been set upon her movements, to escape from the camp to Paris. The Marshal's rage on discovering her flight fell upon her husband, who in his anxiety to divert suspicion as to her intentions had found it necessary to remain at his post. A *lettre de cachet* was issued against him, but he effected his escape. For some months he was concealed in a cave, the only person in the secret of his whereabouts being a poor *curé*. In order to forget his disappointment the Marshal composed his only work, *Mes Réveries*, the publication of which was deemed by the Academy a favourable occasion for making him one of the Forty. "Ils veule," he wrote, "me fère de la cadémie, sela m'iret come une bage à un chat." The Marshal's education, like that of many of his illustrious contemporaries, had, it is clear, been terribly neglected. The campaign over, he flew to Paris, sought out Madame Favart, and, finding her inexorable, had her arrested and shut up in the Convent of the Ursulines. The only condition on which she could obtain her release and be reunited to her husband was submission to the Marshal; and to this condition, after an imprisonment of more than a year, she brought herself to accede.

If she could have foreseen that the Marshal was not to live many months after his magnificent triumph! Immediately after his death the Favarts were restored to each other, and the great sorrow which had clouded their early life was softened as time went on by domestic happiness, ever-increasing reputation, and material prosperity. The Opéra Comique was re-opened under their auspices on a new basis, and soon became the home of a distinct branch of art. Here, among many other pieces, Favart's *Trois Sultanes* was brought out, with his wife as Roxelane. The following impromptu was suggested by the performance to the Abbé d'Atteignant:—

Quel joli couple à mon avis
Que Favart et sa femme !
Quel auteur met dans ses écrits
Plus d'esprit et plus d'âme ?
Est-il, pour l'exécution,
Actrice plus jolie,
On prendrait l'un pour Apollon
Et l'autre pour Thalie.

But even the happiest lives must come to an end. Madame Favart, after a painful illness, passed away at the early age of forty-five. Her husband felt her loss acutely ; indeed, it is said that he never entered a theatre again without a pang. He survived her twenty years, dying at a ripe old age in the time of the Revolution. Though his sight failed him as the end drew near, his intellectual faculties were almost unimpaired, and it is pleasant to think he should have been spared to hear that the political system under which such an outrage as that upon his wife could be committed with impunity had at length been overthrown.

THEATRICAL BYWAYS.

BY ARTHUR W. PINERO.

IN a speech recently delivered to the supporters of a theatrical charity, Mr. Irving inveighed most strongly against a class of persons whom he denominated the cadgers of the profession. In an era of machinery, when rods and wheels of iron supersede fingers and thumbs, and when even beneficence is subjected to the yard measure, it may be well to consider whether so large a body as the actors—a corporation which it is graciously granted associates the virtue of charity with all the vices—should not consider the subject of their keeping pace with other bodies in the formation of charitable organizations. It is to be admitted that these organizations have of late weighed so heavily upon the bump of benevolence as to almost crush it out of shape, and beyond all recognition ; but when such associations have for their object a discrimination in almsgiving, and not its suppression, nothing but good can be said of them. The actor being so openly allowed to be the possessor of the charitable virtue is naturally more exposed to the temptation of easing his heart at the expense of his pocket, and often finds himself at the end of a year with nothing but an empty purse and a good conscience. Yet, though theatrical salaries nowadays are larger, actors more thrifty, theatres more numerous, and the public less prejudiced than in former times, there is an increase rather than a diminution of piteous appeals for charity. Since, then, this increase cannot be traced to the parsimony of the alms-giver, it is worth while to consider the material of which the recipients are formed.

The objects, worthy and unworthy, of theatrical charity may be

divided into three classes. First class : The cadger, barefaced and smooth-tongued, utterly without qualification. Second class : The cadger diluted, shambling and dirty, with a slight qualification. Third class : The real hero of the stage, the truly unfortunate, who suffers and wants, and begs not.

The Cadger Number One is a creature worthy the most profound study—the *crème de la crème* of imposture. He is not an actor, but one who lives upon actors. What is more, he never was an actor : he is a liar, and nothing else. Perhaps he has been a stage carpenter, or a property-man, or an intelligent supernumerary (he is intelligent), or a bill inspector, or one hundred other things ; at any rate he has a knowledge of theatrical establishments, which is quite sufficient for his purpose. He is the writer of the following letter to an old actor in a London theatre :—

“ Eight o’clock.

“ MY DEAR MR. A,

“ I dare say you don’t remember me, but I had the honour of supporting you at the Theatre Royal, Gloucester, in the month of February, alas, fifteen years ago ! On that occasion you were pleased to evince some interest in me, and to tender me much admirable advice, which nothing but a train of unfortunate circumstances has rendered useless. I am a married man with a wife and three children (at present at the corner of the street), and am the victim of the most acute rheumatism through damp hose in *Coriolanus*. Will you assist to alleviate the utter destitution of my unhappy children ? Your great reputation for charity would have drawn me to you had I not a personal remembrance of your former kindnesses. Bearer waits.

“ Your distressed servant,
“ Z.”

“ P.S.—Raining hard.”

I dismiss Cadger Number One by saying that in nine cases out of ten he will meet with a response, and that each response contributes to the rearing of a young progeny of cadgers, which progeny shall meet us years hence, full-blown impostors, created and nourished by our own slipshod charity.

Cadger Number Two has been an actor, and would be one still if he could get employment. But he was always a careless, idle fellow, and has been seen drunk. He was once the associate of men now prosperous and respected, and upon these men he preys. The street corners know him well, and he is a lurker in the gloom of the stage-doors. He is great at the christian names of his former friends, remembers being of much assistance to them in their young days, and wants his railway fare to the most distant

town in the north. A wretched fellow this; one hardly knows what to say of him, much less what to do with him.

Number Three is the man we know the least of, and being entirely worthy may be disposed of (as he often is) in a breath. We hear of him but seldom, and then only by chance. He is not a shabby-looking man, for he maintains a good appearance to the last and allows no one to suspect his poverty—which very respectability is much against him. For if Number Three, who perhaps can't stand out any longer, comes to you, his friend, and begs a helping hand, you look him up and down, and finding that he is to the eye as flourishing as yourself you shake your head sadly and pass on, thinking of those more deserving and more urgent cases which shall come upon you when night falls—firstly, the man with his wretched wife and family at the corner of the street, and, secondly, your poor friend of ten years' standing who is cast upon the rocks very high if not very dry, because (his only fault) he will drink like a fish.

Of all the claimants upon our pockets Cadger Number Two is the most difficult to deal with, and demands, if he does not deserve, the greatest consideration. For why should a man who has never reflected the smallest particle of credit upon his trade, who has indeed done it more harm than half-a-dozen earnest workmen can efface; who never having really striven to succeed finds himself a vagabond and an outcast, why should such a man be a tax and a burden upon you, my friend, and clog the byways of our profession with his foul and objectionable presence? What is there in our craft that we feel ourselves bound to foster those who reflect nothing but disgrace upon it? The first impulse of a kind heart is to relieve everyone who has a plaintive tale and a shabby coat, and it is these first impulses that we should restrain.

To administer our mites properly and legitimately we need an organization amongst ourselves. There should be a common fund, or half-a-dozen such funds, into which we should throw our spare moneys, governed and regulated by a committee of our best men, who should bestow nothing upon a questionable object, and who should seek out—ay, *seek out*—my real hero, Number Three, and help him, honest, creditable fellow that he is, on his road. By these means, in a few years, we should have less real distress in the midst of us, and should be enabled to turn up the gas on the dark corners round our stage-doors. To stamp out the Cadger Number One, the rank impostor, is perhaps an easy task, but to turn our backs upon the Cadger Diluted, the man whose hand we have grasped in former years, and who perhaps has amused us with his merry jokes and tales, well—it will give us a twinge.

But is it not worth our while? Is it not worth our while to have the byways of the stage as free from mud and filth as are its high-roads?

S A P.

BY A MAN OF THE WORLD.

WHEN a new word has been added to the insufficient terminology of criticism the language has become sensibly enriched. When that addition has been made by one in authority a notable circumstance has occurred, and it behoves those who take a lively interest in the literature of the moment to treat the new-born epithet with all the respect it deserves. The baby wordling may not yet appear much or frequently in public; but nurtured by the attentions of a proud parent into a healthy adolescence it may hereafter take a permanent and respectable position in the vocabulary. The discovery of a new planet is no doubt an affair of some moment. But let astronomers look after the credentials of such remote and suspicious arrivals. Honour is clearly due to one who, sailing through unknown seas, opens up a continent. But there being no new lands to happen on we are forbidden to look in that direction for heroes. My homage is to the Columbus of verbiage. At least he is one who has striven nobly to ameliorate the pains of expression; to extend our facilities for giving elegant and intelligible utterance to the "thoughts that burn."

Within recent weeks an electric light has been shed upon the mysteries of dramatic composition and upon the ethics of the producers of plays. For this illumination we are indebted to a venerable and accomplished critic who has contributed to the stage one hundred and fifty plays—some of which are original. By the adroit use of a novel term—which, like his stage-work, is adapted—he has defined for the commoner sort the precise, professional, and moral position of those gentlemen who, taking the plot of a Parisian piece, produce in this country a drama founded thereon, and dub themselves authors of the same. Hitherto much darkness has covered this question. Indeed certain feeble and ill-informed persons have gone so far as to describe the fine art of adaptation in the words of a deceased playwright called Sheridan, alleging that the Anglo-Saxon adapters treat the French originals as "gypsies do stolen children—disfigure them to make them pass for their own." The injustice of this reflection has, however, been made manifest by the fact of an interview and by the adoption of an epithet. To

describe that interview and to indicate a few of the beauties of that epithet are the objects of this brief essay.

On a certain muggy afternoon, towards the close of last February, two gentlemen met at an appointed spot within the precincts of the ancient city of Westminster. The one was Mr. Tom Taylor, the editor of *Punch*; the other was Mr. Edward Clarke, the rising barrister. Both of these gentlemen, it may be inferred, took a considerable interest in dramatic literature; for no sooner did they meet than they fell to talking about the stage. Their views differed widely, and some degree of asperity characterised the conversation that ensued between them. Naturally public opinion will go with the elder of the two gentlemen, whose experience of the stage goes beyond the memory of most men. It is unnecessary, however, to reproduce the interesting duologue. I will merely quote the portion of it which gave birth to that wordling which is perhaps destined to play a conspicuous part in the wars of the critics.

"A drama," said the barrister, "a drama, I believe, consists of plot and dialogue?" Mr. Taylor gazed reproachfully through his spectacles at the presumptuous youth who would thus curtly define a thing known in all its mysteries but to the initiated few. His look seemed to preface his uttered answer with—"If you believe that, you'd believe anything;" what he actually did reply was, "You might as well say that a tree consisted of leaves." Uncrushed by this retort, the lawyer ventured to allege that the arboreal figure would more nearly have approached his definition had Mr. Taylor spoken of the trunk *and* leaves of a tree. He but rushed upon his fate. Him answering thus spake the mild-eyed Nestor—spake with a fine mingling of Johnsonian dignity and impatience—"Sir, you forgot the SAP!"

That is it! The veriest verbal bantling extant, but potent as an infant Hercules withal. SAP! Mysterious as the divine afflatus; undefinable as the Odic force. Even the rash junior gazed reverently upon the parent of the word,—though he himself was not wholly unacquainted with Terms—and gazed reverently at the superior spirit. A revelation had been made to him. He now viewed his interlocutor, not as a mere man but as an embodiment of SAP—as one in whom were large secretions of a wondrous and incommunicable endowment, whereby the English adapter is enabled to breathe the breath of life into the dry bones of a French original. Truly a great gift, and blessed is he whose brains are full of it. That which has hitherto appeared obscure is now as clear as noon-day under the light of a brilliant epithet. That which to some looked very much like moral obliquity is now sublimated into an admirable professional rectitude. Let no dog of a Frenchman

claim a right in his transfigured wares. He is a barren creature. His efforts are merely tentative. His skeleton works bud into dramatic life when the dry joints are filled with the sap of the English adapter.

But the beauty of the new term consists not merely in the precision with which it applies to one branch of art. It is nice, but it is also elastic, and when tested is found capable of an almost infinite application. For example,—There once lived in the north of Scotland a genteel family whose means were not at all on a level with their pretensions. A rigid economy, extending to both pantry and wardrobe, enabled these gentlefolk to entertain once a year their more opulent neighbours. Dean Ramsay, in telling of them, describes the unutterable confusion experienced by the heads of the household when at one of these banquets the young heir and hope of the house announced triumphantly to the tittering guests that his new breeks were made out of “the auld curtains.” Alas! good people, that blush should have been spared you. No shame attached to an exercise of an ingenuity that amounted to genius. Now-a-days the manufacture of new breeks from auld curtains is a calling honourable in the extreme, and the ability so to breech an heir was but a proof of the possession of that SAP so eulogised by the author of the *Ticket-of-Leave Man*.

Some time ago a friend of mine purchased, in the open street and for a small sum, an umbrella which is extremely serviceable, but which he subsequently discovered to be made from the silk of two old umbrellas. He swore at large, and described the vendor as nothing better than a swindler. A harsh epithet, my friend. The deft merchant pursued a creditable vocation. This was his use of the Sap which heaven had given him, and he displayed no more turpitude than the Scotch lady who breeched her son with a pair of curtains; or the English adapter who out of two foreign plays makes one English drama.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Taylor’s discovery was not made somewhat earlier. Had Sap been accepted as an admissible term during the lifetime of the late Mr. Andrew Halliday he would not have considered himself bound in honour to describe those spectacles of his, which brought money to the Drury Lane Theatre, as adaptations from the works of Sir Walter Scott. And indeed I see no reason why he should not have described Antony and Cleopatra as a new work of his own. He would have had reason. In his version of Shakespeare’s esteemed work there was less of the spirit of the original than in half of the adaptations—which thanks to plenty of Sap—grace our boards.

Those nomads, to whom, in a quotation from *The Critic*, reference

has already been made, usually dyed the faces of purloined children with vegetable juices. That even they, therefore, might claim equal rights with the adapter is clear. They were literally indebted for the artistic result of their labours to the efficiency of Sap. If colour is essential in the disguise of a stolen child, colour is surely of equal importance in the removal of scenes from the streets of Paris to the streets of London. It is a coincidence that in each case the operator should be indebted to Sap.

And so, gentlemen, all goes pleasantly. On the authority of a most Sap-ient critic you are justified in conveying Gallic wares and in sap-ping French brains. "Whatever is, is right." Lay on, Macduff & Co. Nobody will object—except perchance the French author. And he, of course, *is* nobody.

FORTUNIO'S SONG.

From "*Le Chandelier*."

BY ELLA DIETZ.

THINK you that I'm going to tell
 Whom I dare love?
 An empire could not me compel
 To name my dove!

We'll sing, and this thing shall be told
 Of her, my sweet,
 Whom I adore—her hair is gold,
 Like golden wheat.

All her sweet wishes I fulfil,
 All her commands.
 My life is hers, my heart, my will
 Are in her hands.

In anguish of a love forlorn
 I draw my breath;
 And with this woe my soul is torn
 E'en unto death.

But, loving much, I will not tell
 Whom I dare love;
 That I would die, she knows right well,
 For her, my dove!



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Portraits.

XX.—MR. CONWAY.

THE author of *Our Boys* is not the only actor who is connected with the family of Lord Byron. On the death of the poet the barony devolved upon his first cousin, George Anson. The latter had two daughters, one of whom married Captain John Blenkinsopp Coulson, of Blenkinsopp Castle, Northumberland. This marriage was blessed with a numerous issue, one of the youngest of the children being the subject of the present memoir. The first seventeen years of his life were spent almost entirely in the north country. He was educated at Rossall, and, like his father and all his brothers, was passionately devoted to country sports. He saw little of towns and less of theatres. From an early age, however, he felt a good deal of curiosity in regard to the drama, and would read with avidity every play and every piece of the theatrical gossip he could lay hands upon. Before he arrived at man's estate this taste had become a passion. In 1867, at the age of eighteen, he left Rossall, and proceeded to Berlin to complete his education. He remained in the Prussian capital for two years, and during that time almost lived in the theatre. For the sake of seeing a play he would neglect most important studies and forego any social enjoyment. He returned to England a stage-struck youth, but with scarcely a hope of being able to carry his wishes into effect. In 1872, however, a chain of circumstances into which we need not inquire too curiously reduced him to the necessity of living either on the bounty of his relations or by his own exertions, and he immediately determined to try his fortunes as an actor. His family, as may be supposed, were far from approving of his resolution. They said he would regret it only once, which would be always. The youth was not to be dissuaded, but in order to conciliate the prejudices of his relatives against the stage he assumed the name of Conway. Towards the end of 1872, after a brief period of preparation, he appeared at the Olympic Theatre as Bernard in Mr. Dubourg's *Without Love*. One night, just before the curtain was about to rise on *Maggie Dorme*, a piece written by Sir Charles Young, it was found that the leading "juvenile" had not come. Mr. Conway, who held a small part, volunteered to take the part of the absentee. The offer was eagerly accepted, and to the surprise of everybody behind the scenes he acquitted himself admirably. This incident brought him into notice, the consequence being that on *Little Em'ly* being put in rehearsal he received the

part of David. The merits of this impersonation were recognised by no less a person than Mr. Bancroft, who then engaged him to play Arnold Brinkworth on a provincial tour with *Man and Wife*. This tour ended, Mr. Conway proceeded to the Lyceum, where, under the leadership of Mr. Irving, he appeared as François in *Richelieu*, Christian in the *Bells*, Lord Moray in *Charles I.*, a French gentleman in *Philip*, and Osric in *Hamlet*. "Both from Mr. Bateman and Mr. Irving," he writes to a friend, "I received the greatest kindness and encouragement." In the spring of 1875 he joined a company led by Mrs. John Wood, returning to London in the following August to appear at the Haymarket as Dick Dowlas, and in the juvenile parts in most of the pieces favoured by Mr. J. S. Clarke. In the winter, fortified by a little practical experience of Haymarket comedies, he played Bertie to the Colonel White of Mr. Sothorn in *Home*, and was soon afterwards to be found supporting Miss Neilson. One day, to his intense consternation, he was called upon to act Romeo—a part of which he knew next to nothing—in ten days, and that at a time when pieces he was concerned in had been put in rehearsal. Nevertheless, he addressed himself sternly to his task, mastered at least all the lines, and contrived to give a very spirited account of the character. There were many defects in the performance, of course; but "the management and Miss Neilson were kindness itself." In the summer of 1876 he started on a provincial tour with that lady, but in the following November joined the Court company to play in *Brothers* and *New Men and Old Acres*. In September he rejoined Miss Neilson, returning with her to the Haymarket in 1878. He next supported Mr. Sothorn in the *Crushed Tragedian* and the *Hornet's Nest*. Last summer he appeared at the Prince of Wales's Theatre in *Diplomacy*, and was "loaned" by that house to play Faust in *Gretchen*. Mr. Conway it is clear, is not one of those disciples of the new school who "play at acting" and remain idle when they can. Since 1872 he has not been three months without work on his hands, and his *repertoire* is already very long. That he will take a high position in his profession we have no doubt. "Mr. Conway's Romeo," said the *Athenæum* in 1876, "may be considered the first effort in imaginative art of a young actor who has shown hitherto few qualifications beyond youth and good looks, with a moderation of style which, if not ascribable to timidity, is a sign of intelligence. It is a creditable impersonation. Mr. Conway's bearing is gallant, his speech is not wanting in passion, and his general rendering, except in the scene in the friar's cell—one of the most difficult in the drama—is effective."

Fenilleton.

OUR SIR PETER.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

“WELL, what is it now?”

“Very sorry, sir, but—”

“Now look here, Smithers, before you go any farther, I warn you—solemnly warn you, that if you’ve any more bad news for me I shall go mad—mad as a hatter.”

“I’m very sorry, sir, but it ain’t my fault, sir. It’s very hard, sir, really sir. I took to the stage, sir, with the idea of doing well in comedy, and I get made a sort of travelling buffer, to get all the rows and kicks from you and the company.”

“Yes, yes, you do, Smithers,” I said. “I’m very sorry. You’re a very good fellow.”

“It’s our Sir Raleigh, sir. His compliments, and is he to eat his boots?”

“Is he to *what*?”

“Is he to eat his boots, sir? He says he has parted with everything that he can sell or pawn, that the limits of decency will allow; that he hasn’t a penny left; and that if you do not send him something on account he will have to try and obtain some nutriment off what were once a pair of strong working man’s bluchers at eight-and-six.”

“Go and tell our Sir Raleigh to tie the bootstrings together, and hang himself in the flies, leaving his boots to a better actor.”

“Yes, sir,” said Smithers solemnly; and the tall, thin, pale-faced boy moved towards the door.

“Here, stop! No, no!” I cried. “Don’t for goodness’ sake do that, Smithers. The man will be furious. Here tell him that there will be a general payment to-night after the comedy. Don’t say a word about the boot-laces.”

“No, sir,” said Smithers, and he retired, while I took the stage with an audience of one—the stage being the commercial room of the “White-Faced Stag,” in the market-place of that highly-enlightened city Lenton, in the county of Badcaster, and the audience a little, sharp, eager gray man, with a slight stoop, and a habit of leaning his head on one side to gaze at you with one eye at a time, as he took snuff from a silver box, with a great deal of flourish and dash.

Just then he rose, took his hat, glanced at his watch, and went out, leaving the place free for me to blow off a little of the steam pent up within my angry heart.

"If ever there was an ass—an idiot—a fool—I am he," I said aloud. "I might have known it. Did I ever succeed in anything I undertook? Did ever good luck smile upon me from the time I had the measles till that when I got together this confounded company and began to travel? If I could only cut and run."

What a relief it would have been, in one sense of the word; for there would have been no more empty treasury, no more bitterly disappointed faces gazing at me as the cause of their woes, no more trying hard and harder to succeed, to find that with every step I took I became morally bogged deeper and deeper, till escape seemed impossible.

No, I could not forsake my company, for there was a little intangible something called honour which forbade the step, and I knew that I, the ill-used, unhappy manager of the star company known as the "Garrick's," must prosecute my venture to the bitter end.

There had been desertions from the corps, and troubles of every kind; but I had fought on, mainly keeping the rest together by persuasion, and insisting that the tide must turn if we only waited long enough.

We had been at Lenton three nights, and played to empty benches, the little theatre looking dark and gloomy, and our voices echoing back from roof and gallery, till they seemed to mock us and our every effort.

"Yes, sir; I've been round to the booksellers."

"How many tickets sold?"

Smithers began to brush his hat with his sleeve.

"Don't say they haven't sold any, Smithers," I cried pathetically.

"No, sir, I will not—if you don't wish it," he said.

"Yes, yes," I cried, in the deep tones of tragedy; "say it out, Smithers; the vile, thickheaded, dense townspeople have turned their backs on the drama, and the very play that should have drawn these tattling, gossiping busybodies to throng the house from pit to galleries, finds them utterly wanting. Sheridan—Richard Brinsley Sheridan, it is a blessing that you have been gathered to your fathers."

"I don't think the bills have been fairly shown," said Smithers, who was my greatest sympathiser, and most trusty follower, albeit he was the poorest actor in the company.

"Of course not," I said bitterly; "they never are."

"There are two bill-stickers here, sir," said Smithers; "and one always goes and covers up the other fellow's bills."

I sat astride a very hard chair, and stared across the market-place at our bill, "Theatre Royal, Lenton,—The Garrick Star Company—By particular request—*The School for Scandal*."

"Bah!" I exclaimed; "what mockery this empty puffing is."

Then I began to review my own efforts, and to try to find out why our trip had been so impecunious; but could find but one reason—we were not well known. And yet it was a capital little company. What we did, we did well, after arduous painstaking rehearsal, for there was hardly a member of the company who was not ambitious to distinguish her or himself with the hope of some day walking the London boards. But fate seemed dead against us. I was about to order my modest repast of bread and cheese, when Smithers came in with a run, and I seized the poker.

"Stop—a minute, sir," he panted. "Our Poster wants more tickets directly."

"My poor lad," I said calmly, "this is cruel! I am not so mad that you should use me thus."

"It's all right, sir, quite!" he cried. "The officers from Landport are coming over in two drags, and the officers of the *Juno* are coming too."

"Vile caitiff, thou liest!" I cried, seizing him very tenderly by the throat. "Smithers, my dear boy, is it true?"

"It's as true as true, sir. Give me the tickets; I'll run over."

I handed them out with trembling fingers, and as Smithers disappeared there was a knock at the door, and a boy with an ink smudge across his face, whom I recognised as the young Faust who brought the proof of the bills a week before, entered to say in a broken voice:

"Please, sir, master says, will you send all the tickets you've got, for all the officers is a coming to the theayter to-night, and all the folks in the town's sure to come, and can you give me a seat?"

"Did thy master say those last words?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; and can you give me a seat?"

"Ah, I see," I replied. "But that thy face is black, I should be tempted to give thee a front seat in the boxes."

"I'd rayther have the middle one in the front row of the pit," said the boy, grinning.

"And you shall," I cried. "Come at six o'clock to the stage-door, and you shall be the first in the auditorium. Now take these to your master—run."

It was too good to believe. But it was true, and one by one the whole of our company came in to strengthen the glad tidings.

For the officers had set the fashion, and it was a fact that we were to have a crowded house. The squire sent a groom four miles on horseback for a private box. The clergyman took another. The retired draper another; and there was a fight for the other three. In fact, by four o'clock there was not a reserved seat to be had in the house, and of course that meant a bumper for pit and gallery.

At three o'clock I had rung the bell, and the landlord had come in smiling.

"Landlord," I said, "I want something nice by four o'clock. Now don't say a chop or a steak, for I could not stand them."

"No, sir, of course not, sir; but if you wouldn't mind Mr. Stickley, sir—travels in hardware goods, sir—he's ordered a very nice little dinner, sir; fried soles, roast fowl, bit of 'am, and a roley-poley pudding. If you wouldn't mind joining him."

"Not another word, good host," I cried; and I longed for the coming of the Manchester man, so that we might fraternize.

As keen, gentlemanly, and well-informed a man as I ever met, and the dinner was delicious. He insisted upon opening a bottle of sherry, as he told me how he had a great love for the drama, had played *en amateur*, and said he should take a seat in the boxes.

"Not one left," I said.

"Glad to hear it, my dear sir," he cried. "Your health. Not such a very bad glass of sherry, eh? This is a very good glass of sherry," he continued in a droll voice, "eh? Poor old Rabian, that loon here. I'm an old pittite, I shall sit in the pit."

"That you shall not," I said, "you shall have a chair by the prompter."

"Agreed," he said; and we finished that chicken to such an extent that the wonder was how the roley-poley pudding-dish went out so empty.

"Now a cigar *and* a cup of coffee," I said, "followed by an hour's calm digestion, and I shall be ready for anything. Hallo, Smithers, just in time for a glass of wine, eh? What's the matter?"

"Finlayson went off by the 1.20 train, sir; said he wouldn't stand it any longer."

My cigar dropped from my fingers.

"Finlayson—our Sir Peter!"

"I only found it out just now, sir," cried Smithers. "What shall we do?"

Do? What should we do? Jenkins? No. He must keep to Sir Oliver. Verey? No, he must keep to Moses. Smithers wouldn't do; I was obliged to play Charles; Murray Lawson could only play Joseph. Every part was fitted exactly, and if

I attempted to make an alteration the whole scheme would fall to pieces.

Oh, it was dreadful, to have waited months for success, to have spent our last shillings with patience, sorrow, and hope, and now to fail like this.

I sat down and held my head between my hands, trying to think out some plan.

"The part," I at length said, "must be read by the prompter."

"What!" cried my dinner companion; "play the *School for Scandal* without a Sir Peter? it couldn't be done."

"But it must be done," I said bitterly.

"My dear sir," said my friend, "do you know that there will be half a regiment of soldiers, and half the crew of a man-of-war behind the officers, and if you don't give them what they've paid to see, there'll be a riot."

I was dumb, and sat helplessly gazing at the speaker.

"Smithers," I said at last, "the money must be returned, the theatre closed. No performance."

My voice sounded hollow, and I began to wonder how the landlord was to be paid.

"Return the money, sir? close the house, sir?" faltered Smithers.

"No," said my new friend, Mr. Elder. "I'll play Sir Peter myself."

"You?" I exclaimed, thrusting back my chair as he rose, took out his snuff-box, tapped it, and took a pinch with so courtly an air, that I mentally clothed him in lavender grey and powder, saw his shrunken legs in his silk stockings, and the lace ruffles falling over his thin white hands. "You play Sir Peter?"

"Why not?" he said. "Have you any one else?"

"N-no," I faltered. "But——"

"Don't let's waste time," he replied. "Give me a book. I know the comedy well."

"But think, my dear sir."

"When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect?" he began, in such a tone of voice, and with such a look that Smithers clasped his hands, and, hardly knowing what to do, I placed the part in his hands, thinking that after all it would be better than having it simply read.

"You'll coach me on all you can," he said quietly; and then, taking the book, he read hard, walking up and down the room, till I was forced to go to the theatre, where the first person I set eyes upon was the printer's boy.

I had forgotten him, but soon sent him to a good place, not in

the pit, for it was crammed, but in a chair by the prompter, to his intense delight.

Then I had to turn to the company, who flowed round to know if we were to play without a Sir Peter.

"Yes, yes," I cried, pompously, to give them confidence. "Dress, dress, quick! I have a splendid Sir Peter here."

While the farce was being played, I dressed our Sir Peter myself, and, as far as appearances went, he was admirable. Then I made my own toilet, noticing all the while how busily and well the little man was rehearsing.

At last, up went the curtain, and my heart throbbed with pleasure and dread, for the house was crammed and in excellent temper, and the first scene went capitally.

"Tell me exactly when to go on, and be ready to prompt," said our Sir Peter quietly. "I shall act the part my fashion, and not trust to yours."

With my heart in my mouth I launched him at the proper moment, and felt a strange interest in the little, elderly figure as he went on, was received with plenty of applause, and ignoring all the stage directions, delivered his lines in a way that brought down the house, it was so natural, so true to life, that the audience did not detect the many sentences he did not speak, nor the many lines that Sheridan had never written.

Then came the scene with Lady Teazle, who was an admirable actress, and we all watched it from the side, a buzz of whispers rising as first one and then another saw that our Sir Peter was nowhere in his stage knowledge, while Lady Teazle's representations were at first nervous, troubled, angry, and then on the point of breaking down, answering our Sir Peter, standing anywhere but in the supposed-to-be-orthodox places. He never once looked at the audience, and often turned his back upon it, but at the end of two or three minutes we were all electrified, for it was the real encounter between the old jealous husband and his young wife; true natural points were made, and both artists in turn made their exits amidst a storm of applause, which was continued till they returned to answer their call.

Lady Teazle came to me in tears.

"I won't, I can't go on again," she cried. "He don't know his lines; he never crosses at the right times; he is all wrong from beginning to end, and gags horribly."

It was not to be denied. Sir Peter went off on the wrong side, crossed when he had no business so to do, and took the stage in a way such as we had never seen before. But all the same it *was* Sir Peter, the angry, bitter, crotchety old man that Sheridan

meant to paint, and the audience never once recognised the glaring errors that were patent to all of us.

At last, when it came to the screen scene, where the poor old man breaks down over his troubles, and confides to Joseph how he has provided for Lady Teazle, the genuine tears ran down his cheeks, and there were moistened handkerchiefs fluttering all over the house.

Then came the change. Peter's almost childish delight at finding Joseph with the supposed little French milliner, his cachinnation and confidential by-play to Charles were wonderful. Lastly, his exclamation :

"Lady Teazle ! by all that's damnable !"

fairly electrified the house, and the drop fell amidst a noise that was deafening.

It did not matter how the rest of the comedy went, for the feat was achieved ; but even here the uxorious, forgiving, old husband was so admirably conceived that we all forgot the "gagging" and slips, with the strange business introduced, in the reality of the playing from beginning to end.

"Well?" I said at last to Lady Teazle.

"He's grand!" she cried. "Ah, if he only knew his part."

"Hush!" I said; "he saved us to-night."

After a regular hand-shaking, I got him out of his old costume, and back to the Bald-Faced Stag, where we had supper, and over a cigar afterwards I thanked him as sincerely as ever man was thanked.

"But why don't you take to it?" I said.

He looked up at me, and smiled in his curious way.

"Sentiment, sir, sentiment. No, my dear sir, I am a man of business, and shall be so to the end. The fact is—I tell you as I daresay we shall never meet again—you think that I acted well to-night?"

"Well, sir? It was grand—the biggest thing I have seen."

"Nonsense!" he said, smiling and taking snuff; "I did not act at all. I know that play too well; it resembled my own life. I only felt that it was real, and made myself Sir Peter for the time. I leave early to-morrow; good night."

"Yes, he's right," I said to myself. "But we cannot all put the life into our parts. Well, Smithers, not in bed?"

"No, sir. Sixty-five pounds ten."

Thanks to our Sir Peter.

En Passant.

THE POET LAUREATE is not the only writer who has made the story of Fair Rosamond the groundwork of a play. In or about 1707 Addison brought out an opera on the subject, the music being composed by Thomas Clayton. In the course of the century the piece was twice revived, each time with new music. Though rich in beauties of diction, it never won popular favour. In 1653, a *Henry I. and Henry II.* "by William Shakspeare and Robert Davenport" was entered on the books of the Stationers' Company, but through the escapade of Warburton's cook only the title of the play is now known. Then we have a *Henry II., king of England, with the death of Rosamond*, by John Bancroft (1693); a *Henry and Rosamond*, by William Hawkins, son of the learned serjeant who wrote on Crown law (1749); a *Henry II.*, by William Shirley, better known by the *Black Prince* (about 1780); a *Henry II., with the Fall of Rosamond*, by Thomas Hull (1774), and the tragedy published by Ireland with *Vortigern*. Hull's play was once put in rehearsal at Hull, the part of the Queen being allotted to a Mrs. Montague. This lady, actuated by some jealousy of the representative of Rosamond, thought to spoil the effect of the performance by *reading* the lines put into her Majesty's mouth; the audience, however, would not have it, and at last—never having looked at the book—she drew herself up to her full height, cried "Curse you all," and swept off the stage with magnificent scorn.

THE desirability of establishing a national theatre has been so frequently discussed in these pages that we need only chronicle the appearance of Mr. J. R. Planché's pamphlet on the subject. The veteran author cites the following as the three important objects which such an institute is intended to advance:—The revival of the masterpieces of the great dramatists of the last three centuries; the production of plays of the highest class, which, for commercial reasons, have never been represented; and the general cultivation of histrionic art, such as is carried on by the Théâtre Français. Mr. Planché estimates that £20,000 would cover the expenses of a season of eight months, and the receipts, with a scale of prices running from one shilling to seven, he estimates at £250 per week. The capital sum, in default of Government assistance, he proposes should be raised by subscription.

"THE other evening," says *The Players* for January, 1860, "we wended our way towards Crosby Hall, where we were informed that Mr. Henry Irving was about to read Bulwer's *Lady of Lyons*. We recollected that Mr. Irving was a gentleman of considerable talent and a great favourite in the provinces. We have often seen his name honourably figuring in the columns of our provincial contemporaries. Now, instead of finding the usual conventional 'mediocrity,' which would seem to characterise the

dramatic reader, we were gratified by hearing the poetical *Lady of Lyons* poetically read by a most accomplished elocutionist, who gave us not only words, but that finer indefinite something which proves incontestably and instantaneously that the fire of genius is in the artist. Claude's picture of his imaginary home was given with such feeling as to elicit a loud burst of approval from his hearers, as also many other passages in the play. The characters were well marked, especially Beauséant and Madame Deschappelles, whilst the little part of Glavis was very pleasingly given. Mr. Irving was frequently interrupted by the applause of his numerous and delighted audience, and at the conclusion was unanimously called to receive their marks of approval."

THE following extracts from New York criticisms on a performance of *Lohengrin* will speak for themselves:—*Tribune*—"The performance last night was in most respects delightful. . . . In the Elsa of Gerster we discovered a most sympathetic, tender and fascinating picture of one of the loveliest of heroines, a picture true to the high ideal and full of apparently unstudied elegance and sweet simplicity. . . . No one can come away from such a graceful personation in a spirit of fault-finding. . . . Campanini is not merely as good as he used to be; he is better. . . . Ortruda found a superb representative in Lablache. . . . Foli was a satisfactory King, and Franceschi a good Herald." *Herald*—"It is scarcely possible that those among the audience who know anything about Wagner's music, or who have ever listened to a performance of *Lohengrin* before, could have left the Academy with the most favourable impressions. Indeed it may be asserted that it is scarcely possible to conceive of a performance of *Lohengrin* more thoroughly incomplete and wretched. Campanini made a most brilliant Lohengrin, and Foli a majestic and excellent voiced King, but both Gerster and Arditti signally failed. . . . *Lohengrin* was given last evening in a fashion quite unique for its disgraceful rendering and mutilated shape."

Le Moliériste, a monthly review, has been established in Paris by M. Georges Monval, Archiviste of the Comédie Française. Among the contributors are MM. Claretie, F. Coppée, Fournel, Ed. Fournier, A. Houssaye, Paul Lacroix, Sarcey, Ed. Thierry, and A. Vitu. "On a beaucoup fait," the editor says, "pour Molière; l'Angleterre a fait plus encore pour Shakespeare. Il y a, chez nos voisins, un Musée Shakespearien, une Bibliothèque Shakespearienne, il y a surtout une *Société-Shakespeare*. Nous avons rêvé d'établir tout cela chez nous pour notre Molière, et c'est dans ce triple but que nous commençons modestement par une petite revue spéciale qui sera un trait d'union, un intermédiaire, un lien de correspondance et de sympathique confraternité entre les admirateurs passionnés de celui que Boileau nommait le grand Contemplateur."

THERE is a clause in the lease of Drury Lane Theatre that the scenery and properties employed there shall belong henceforth to the renters. Unaware of this, Mr. Boucicault, in view of the production of *Formosa*, hired some expensive rare bouts and drawing-room furniture. _The piece being

withdrawn, Mr. Boucicault proceeded to remove the articles, and was then informed as to how matters stood. The author-actor soon devised a means of extricating himself from the difficulty. One afternoon a man in his confidence called at the theatre, and after transacting some business with the utmost gravity, invited the custodian of the articles to have a "bit of dinner" with him at the Albion. The invitation was promptly accepted, and in less than half an hour the bouts and furniture were far away from the theatre.

MR. A. BRERETON, of Liverpool, writes to us with reference to the remarks made in our last number on Mr. Irving's view as to the portraits in *Hamlet*. Quoting the description commencing, "What a grace was seated on his brow," he says, "Is it likely, nay, even *possible*, that such a portrait would have been allowed to exist? What would the sight of it have been to Claudius. Then the place! Outside the door leading to the bed-chamber, 'that chamber which has been desecrated by the faithless Queen.' Even supposing that Claudius had allowed it to remain there, would the Queen have done so, with the contrast always before her between the two men? Out of respect to Hamlet's memory it might have been allowed to remain until his mother's marriage, but certainly not later."

MR. WILLIE DEUTSCH in a letter to the *New York Mercury* says he is delighted with his experiences as Mr. Boucicault's manager. The great original playwright was so angelically eloquent pending the preliminary negotiations that Mr. Deutsch scorned the idea of a written contract, feeling more than assured by Mr. Boucicault's voluntary verbal propositions. "The engagement," says Mr. Deutsch, "has resulted in causing me to realize a social and pecuniary felicity rarely accorded to any manager. Practically I paid all expenses, while my dear friend Boucicault feigned contentment with the entire receipts as his share. Henceforth I shall avoid Boucicault in this world, and shall neither smoke, drink, nor swear, in fact I shall pray three times daily during the remainder of my life in order to make assurance doubly sure that we will not meet hereafter."

An atrocious murder was committed in Texas on the 20th March. Currie, a railroad detective, spoke rudely to an actress in the waiting-room at the Marshall railway station, and on being remonstrated with by Mr. Porter and Mr. Maurice Barrymore, the actors, who were with her at the time, incontinently shot them. Mr. Porter died soon afterwards, and Mr. Barrymore—a Cambridge man, by the way—is in a critical state. The murderer is under arrest.

MRS. ROUSBY died of consumption at Wiesbaden on the 19th April. The fourth daughter of the late Dr. Downe, Inspector-General in the Army Medical Department, she made her first appearance in London at the Queen's Theatre in 1869, and her performances in *Twixt Axe and Crown* and *Joan of Arc* attracted a good deal of attention. Her success was due rather to rare personal beauty than to any special talents for the stage.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE *Lady of Lyons* has been revived at the Lyceum Theatre, with Mr. Irving as Melnotte and Miss Terry as Pauline. The fact argues nothing less than high moral courage on the part of the actor. From a theatrical point of view the character of the gardener's son is inferior to that of the woman he imposes upon, and this inferiority is all the more manifest when the latter is represented by an actress of rare gifts and attainments. Broadly speaking, Mr. Irving has no reason to repent his temerity. His Melnotte will not take rank with his best impersonations outside the Shakspearean drama, any more, perhaps, than the part of the Duke Aranza is associated with the memory of Edmund Kean. For this the dramatist himself is mainly responsible. Melnotte is placed beyond the pale of sympathy from the beginning of the second act. The mawkishness of his love might be overlooked, but the means by which he wins the affections of the woman for whom he is supposed to cherish a romantic affection hardly admits of palliation. Again, while the bent of Mr. Irving's genius is essentially in the direction of the natural, the *Lady of Lyons* is as artificial and stilted as a classical French comedy of the last century, and the incidents, though suggested by a story of real life, can hardly be said to come within the limits of probability. Nevertheless, Mr. Irving passes through the ordeal with good success. Like Rachel, he can infuse reality, or the semblance of reality, into the unreal. Even when the dramatist is at his furthest from natural truth this power is still made evident. The conception of the character is remarkably new. Mr. Irving's Claude is not the buoyant stripling hitherto set before us as the gardener's son. He is a man of strong passions, resolute will, and romantic sentiment. Had he lived in Paris when the Revolution broke out he would have become one of the leaders of the movement. The bitterness of a hopeless love combines with resentment at the contumely he has experienced to deliver him into the hands of Beauséant. But as soon as the gloom of mad passion has subsided his sense of honour makes itself felt. It may be seen in the settled gloom, unrelieved by a spark of gaiety, which sets upon him throughout the second act, even as he listens to the ardent speeches of Pauline. It may be seen in the quiet yet earnest deference he pays her in the cottage, the depth of every expression of remorse, and the avidity with which he seizes the opportunity of redeeming what he has lost. Impersonated in this way, the character enlists as much sympathy as the story will possibly allow. Then the points made in the

performance are many and effective. It would take some space to enumerate all, but attention may be directed to the transition from joyous hope to poignant anguish as Gaspard proceeds with his tale, the contending feelings with which he reads and re-reads Beauséant's letter, the description of the Palace on the banks of the Lake of Como, and the temporary farewell to Pauline on the terrace in the garden of her father's house. It is objected that Mr. Irving's restless manner and hurried delivery detract from the effect of his first scene; but, although they might be modified with advantage, they are substantially in harmony with the character of a man whose mind is in a ferment through love and afterwards through hate. Beauties of elocution and picturesque deportment are all very well in their way, but should always be subordinated to the illustration of character. It remains to be added that Mr. Irving has some surprises for us in the matter of costume: in the first act he wears a velvet shooting-coat in place of the blue blouse hitherto adopted; the *soi-disant* Prince appears in a surcoat of maroon velvet; Colonel Morier bears a close resemblance to General Bonaparte. Altogether Mr. Irving's acting cannot be said to lower his reputation in any degree. Miss Terry's interpretation of Pauline is open to the objection that it gives undue prominence to one side of the character. The part, as the second title of the piece shows, is compounded of love and pride; Miss Terry gives us all the former but very little of the latter. Even in the first burst of anguish which follows the discovery of the truth—even as in imagination she hears her name derisively bandied from mouth to mouth in Lyons—her love asserts itself above all. This is the only blemish which the most captious spectator can perceive in the performance. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to convey an adequate idea of the artless grace and brightness of the lighter scenes, her tenderness in the garden, the conflict of opposite feelings in the cottage, and the pathetic scenes in the last act. Especially beautiful is her mute acting while Melnotte is speaking of his love and describing his palace; her eyes swim, her ears seem to be drinking in music, her very existence seems ready to be breathed forth in a sigh of silent delight. Anything more graceful and winsome and pathetic than this impersonation can hardly be conceived. Mr. Walter Lacy emerges from his long retirement to play Damas, and as that bluff and caustic yet genial son of Mars proves how greatly the stage has lost by his absence. The part of Beauséant is scarcely suited to Mr. Forrester, who, however, does not fail to endow it with much importance. Miss Paucefort is beyond reproach as the widow, and Mrs. Chippendale's Madame Deschappelles would be perfect if it were not for a little excess of colour. High praise, too, may be awarded to Mr. Bellevue for his Glavis, who in his hands is just such a butterfly as might be supposed, to flutter in the returning sunshine after the storm of the Revolution. The other parts are all in safe keeping. The scenery, it may be added, is of more than average excellence, and goes with the dresses and appointments to form a faithful picture of France in the days of the Directory.

AFTER an uninterrupted run of over four years for *Our Boys* at

the Vaudeville, it comes inevitably to pass that any new play produced by Messrs. James and Thorne has to stand the test of a comparison which can scarcely be favourable, since all who see *The Girls* are sure to have seen *Our Boys*, and to expect to find that comedy adequately followed up. Viewing the new piece from a fairer standpoint, and judging it upon its intrinsic merits, we may pronounce it a typical specimen of its author's stage-work. *The Girls*, with all Mr. Byron's command of witty dialogue and his power of drawing individual characters capable of being made thoroughly effective by the actors to whom they are entrusted, is injured, as a work of art, by the weakness with which its serious interest is manipulated, and by the impotent conclusion to which a brilliant opening is allowed to lead. While we are merely intended to laugh over the contrast between the suitors of the two heroines, between the unassuming good breeding of a poor sculptor and the vulgar self-assertion of a rich cad, nothing could be better or more telling than the dramatist's treatment of his materials. The only serious flaw indeed to be discovered in the comedy up to the end of its second act is the lack of probability in the acceptance by Mr. Clench of so offensive a man as Mr. Plantaganet G. Potter as his son-in-law for a daughter whom he is anxious to see happily settled in life; but we readily forgive the mistake of over-colouring Mr. Potter's repulsive qualities for the opportunity thus given to Mr. James for an elaborate and absolutely consistent portrait of the obtrusive snob more often encountered perhaps in the betting ring than "in the City." With Mr. Thorne to provide in the modest and sentimentally-inclined sculptor an admirable foil to Potter's loudness and hopeless vulgarity, with Mr. Farren and Miss Larkin to indicate cleverly the opposite influences in the Girls' parents which favour the pretensions of two such sons-in-law, and with Miss Bishop and Miss Illington to present an agreeable if not very powerful sketch of the young ladies both before and after their marriage, this earlier half of the comedy is as bright and amusing as need be desired. When however the outcome of the contrasted characteristics of the two men has to be delineated, *The Girls* proves deficient in dramatic force. The pecuniary ruin of the rich people, the suffering of the poor ones, and the reform of Mr. Potter under the chastening influence of adversity, might very well form the subject of a novel, but they do not in themselves possess the requisites for a comedy plot. The last act certainly needs alteration if *The Girls* is to win the popularity deserved by it as a whole. It is eminently satisfactory to find that the art of Mr. James and Mr. Thorne has not suffered from a spell of monotonous labour, and it is pleasant to be able to forecast a probable career for the new comedy which need not form a startling contrast to that enjoyed by any other successful piece save *Our Boys*.

MR. WILLS'S new play, *Ellen, or Love's Cunning*, has been withdrawn from the boards of the Haymarket Theatre for the reconstruction which it so sadly needed, especially in its last two acts. It will therefore be sufficient to note that *Ellen* is well worth any trouble that its author may be induced to spend upon it. No better work has ever been done by him than that which gives such charm

to many of its scenes both humorous and sentimental; and it would have been made matter for grave regret if the inevitable failure brought about by the impotent development of a hazy plot had been suffered to doom the whole play to sudden and lasting oblivion. The leading errors which have to be corrected are the deficiency of obvious connection between the compromising antecedents of the heroine and share in the action in the story, the unintelligibility of the motives of the Jesuit priest who brings about the catastrophe of the plot, and the failure to secure the audience's sympathy for the heroine's exercise of gross deception towards her lover. It will be well too to connect more closely with the main subject of the play the interesting character of Tom Pye, so fresh and original in its conception and so effective in the treatment bestowed upon it by Mr. Charles Kelly; and it is desirable to bring the play, even at the cost of ruthless compression and of the excision of passages very admirable in themselves, within the limits of four acts at most. As a matter of record it may be worth while to note that the principal characters were powerfully played by Messrs. Kelly, Terriss, and Anson, and prettily, if without the requisite strength, by Miss Florence Terry and Miss Blanche Henri.

THE Italian opera season appears likely to prove unusually interesting. The new managers of the Royal Italian Opera appear to be resolved that there shall be no visible diminution of the energy which characterised the management of their lamented father, and Mr. Mapleson has done his utmost to rival the exertions of his new competitors. Up to this time no new works have been produced at either house. At the Royal Italian Opera a number of *débuts* have been made, and most of the new-comers have proved to be highly acceptable. Amongst the latter may be mentioned Mlle. Turolla, who made her *début* as Margherita in Gounod's *Faust*. Although very young she exhibits exceptional intellectuality and grace as an actress, and her voice is bright, resonant, and sympathetic. Her command of expression, both vocal and facial, is remarkable, and there seems every likelihood that she will become a "dramatic" *prima donna* of far more than average distinction. Mlle. Schon, a young Danish artist, with a pure soprano voice of considerable compass and great flexibility, made a great success in the rôle of the Queen in *Les Huguenots*. Whether she is more than a mere vocalist remains to be seen, but it is likely that she may be found equal to the principal parts in the "light" soprano repertory. Mlle. Pasqua, a mezzo-soprano of great promise, made a successful *début* as Leonora in *La Favorita*. She is an impressive and graceful actress, and her voice within the legitimate compass of the mezzo-soprano is resonant and flexible. Signor Nouvelli, a tenor with a sympathetic voice and a refined style, made a fair success at his *début* as Limillo in *Marta*, and Signor Corsi proved himself an efficient second tenor in the rôle of Rambaldi in *Les Huguenots*. Two new basses, Signori Silvestri and Vidal, proved to be useful and intelligent artists, although neither of them possesses the low notes which are required in basso profondo rôles. Signor Sylva, a

Belgian tenore robusto, made a considerable success in the title-character of *Roberto il Diavolo*, and is likely to fill the rôle of Tannhäuser later on in the season. Of the other artists, whose qualities are familiar to the musical public, it is unnecessary at present to say anything. Her Majesty's Opera opened on the 26th ult. with the perennial *Carmen*, in which Mlle. Minnie Hauk and Signor Campanini resumed the rôles of Carmen and Don José.

MR. G. W. GODFREY is to be heartily congratulated upon having at length followed up his *Queen Mab* with a comedy which fully justifies the promise held out by his Haymarket production. *Le Fils de Famille* had, it is true, been already introduced upon the English stage in the plays known as *The Lancers* and *The Discarded Son*; but there was plenty of room for an adaptation so fresh and so competent as that given at a Court *matinée* last week under the happy title of *The Queen's Shilling*. Mr. Godfrey's dialogue is throughout excellent in its natural ease, its point, and its taste; and though he has not succeeded in making the plot altogether probable in its conduct, he has lost none of the spirit which makes it interesting even when it most boldly outrages the possibilities of social and military life. The soldiers are changed into the typical representatives of an English cavalry regiment designated as the 19th Lancers, and every trace save one—a reference of the hero to his mother in a tone which English scapegraces do not generally apostrophize their parents—of the French origin of the play is successfully obliterated. The story of *Le Fils de Famille* deals with an imbroglia brought about by a young man of birth and position who having enlisted as a private meets while serving in the ranks a lady also, for reasons of the moment, assuming a social position inferior to that which belongs to her. For a brief spell the young soldier is persuaded to secretly abandon his uniform, and while at an evening party he meets the colonel of his regiment, whom he discovers to be betrothed to the girl with whom he has fallen in love while she is playing at being a barmaid at an inn. Forthwith young Maitland enters into the lists against his superior officer, whom he takes pleasure in provoking, not always after a fashion worthy of a man who is, or has been, accustomed to the usages of polite society. He openly jeers at Colonel Daunt's singing, makes extremely rude speeches, and finally in a species of sham duel aggravates the old man till he is worthily punished for his insolence by being run through the arm. On the Colonel's discovery of his identity Esmonde is, of course, in his power, as he cannot even "buy himself out" without Daunt's consent, and as he is liable to heavy punishment for his offence in breaking out of the guard-room, and donning the evening dress of ordinary life. But Colonel Daunt exhibits a manly generosity such as his youthful rival does not possess, and Esmonde is made happy by winning both his liberty and his love. Before this is accomplished a good deal of preposterous incident has to be employed, and it is a blot on the play that the hero, who should have all our sympathies, estranges them by some very ill-bred conduct. But in spite of these defects, which the adapter could not well remedy, the comedy-interest of *The Queen's Shilling* never flags, and its several cha-

racters afford the materials for bright and telling impersonations on the part of the principal artists engaged in the representation. Mr. Hare as Colonel Daunt gives an admirable study of the martinet officer who has a heart, though he does not wear it on his sleeve; and the marvellous art with which he simulates a face and figure familiar on parade and in Pall Mall is equalled by the finished force by which the inner nature of the man is depicted in voice, manner, and personal bearing. By Mr. Kendal a distinct artistic advance is made in his sketch of Daunt's light-hearted young rival, whose impertinence he makes as little offensive as it well could be; and Mrs. Kendal, if occasionally too much inclined to take the audience into her confidence, misses no point of the character created by Rose Chéri, and makes it thoroughly entertaining. In minor parts Mrs. Gaston Murray and Miss Kate Phillips act remarkably well; and Mr. Herbert, as well as Mr. McKintosh, add to the completeness of a singularly perfect and even performance. The accuracy with which the military surroundings of the play were at this morning *première* indicated was worthy of the Court, and Mr. Godfrey has thus, like Mr. Hare, every reason to be satisfied with the result of the venture.

THE new comedy with which Mr. Bruce has opened the Royalty proves to be a somewhat vulgar but decidedly clever adaptation from the French. *Crutch and Toothpick*, as Mr. Sims's play is suggestively called, deals with the antagonism between idle gentility and hard-working commerce; and as commerce is here cursed with a lack of refinement and *savoir faire* not now usual amongst London merchants its ultimate defeat by its "swell" rival is of course inevitable. The farcical course of the comedy is amusing, and more than one of its scenes give abundant promise for the future work of its author when he shall have matured and toned down his style. Mr. Edgar Bruce in the chief *rôle*, and Miss Lottie Venne in a minor one, both play with spirit and judgment, the latter a quality which would have saved Mr. C. Groves from some unnecessary over-acting in a strong part. Mr. Bruce and Miss Venne are extremely successful in the musical absurdity—*The Zoo*, by Messrs. Sullivan and B. Rowe—which follows and which would be well worth hearing if only for Miss Venne's piquante rendering of a clever if not very pleasant ditty allotted to a sham *ingénue*.

OF *Esmeralda* it is sufficient to note that the new Gaiety burlesque provides the usual Gaiety performers with a suitable if not particularly ingenious vehicle for their customary achievements, and that Mr. Terry and Mr. Royce, Miss Farren and Miss Vaughan, do all that is necessary for it. The Folly Theatre was opened on Easter Monday by Madame Selina-Dolaro with *The Dragoons*, an English adaptation by Mr. Henry Hersée of *Les Dragons de Villars*, the *chef d'œuvre* of Maillart. In the character of Rose Friquet Madame Dolaro is irresistibly fascinating. Mr. F. H. Celli is an excellent Belamy, and the audience are kept delighted by a succession of charming melodies connected by diverting dialogue.

LAST month a performance was given at the Haymarket Theatre in celebration of Mr. E. L. Blanchard's long association with the stage. Miss Ellen Terry appeared in the *Cyril's Defeat*, Miss Poole

sang "Wapping Old Stairs," and *Money* was played by a company including Miss Roselle, Mr. Neville, Mrs. John Wood, Mr. Sothern, and Mr. John S. Clarke. In the club scene Mr. Planche and other friends of Mr. Blanchard appeared as members. "I would not be so presumptuous," Mr. Sala writes, "as to inquire with particularity as to what Mr. Blanchard's age may be; but I know that when I first made his acquaintance, in the year 1846, he seemed to me a gentleman of mature years and vast theatrical experience. Did he know Macklin?"

IN THE PROVINCES.

At Easter, as is usually the case, there was a marked revival of activity in provincial theatricals. Birmingham playgoers were particularly fortunate, for Mr. Sothern and Mr. Toole appeared almost simultaneously before them, the one at the Royal and the other at the Prince of Wales's. Mr. Sothern's character was Dundreary. "One might easily imagine," says the *Daily Gazette*, "that after presenting the same character between five thousand and six thousand times in various parts of the globe the actor would lose some of the freshness and charm of manner which characterised his earlier performances. It would be so easy in a part like Dundreary, where caricature is the highest quality aimed at, to pander to the guffaws which exaggeration produces among a large section of playgoers, and so to overstep the border line of legitimate caricature. Many actors whose earlier efforts have been judicious interpretations of high-class comedy have committed egregious errors of judgment in this respect. But it cannot be said that Mr. Sothern has done so. His Dundreary is the Dundreary of old—the Dundreary which impressed itself with such vividness and originality when we first saw him many years ago." "The coming visits of Mr. Toole," says the *Daily Mail*, "are surrounded in the eyes of most people by a halo of pleasurable anticipation. The very mention of his name suggests something intensely comical—something to compel our laughter, to elevate the corners of our mouths whether we will it or not; to bring forth our heartiest guffaws if we only incline in anything like an appreciable degree to the indulgence of unrestrained feeling. Under these generally-accepted circumstances, it is most fit and proper that Mr. Toole should be here at holiday time, especially at a period when the conditions of out-door life are calculated to exercise over us such a depressing influence as the present." The chief novelty of the month was *A Wife's Victory*, produced at Liverpool by the Beatrice company. The story is not unconventional: there is a struggle between rank and intellect, and the kernel of the plot is supplied by the undying attachment of a woman to a man who, to annoy a coquettish lover, marries one for whom he has but a cold respect. Neatly constructed, effectively written, and acted by Mr. Harvey, Miss Saville, Mr. Carter-Edwards, and Miss Saunders, the piece met with a very favourable reception. It is often averred that a man is never a prophet in his own country; yet, if we may judge from the applause

bestowed in Manchester on Mr. Sydney Grundy's *Snowball* (the author is the son of the present Mayor of that city), we are justified in assuming that the proverb does not in all cases hold good. The allusion to this Strand comedy reminds us that Miss Swanborough and Mr. Vernon are on tour. The *pièce de résistance* will be *Mammon*, which, although an adaptation of M. Octave Feuillet's *Montjoye*, owes much to the same pen. The high merits of Mr. Vernon's representation of the character of Sir Geoffrey Heriot are too well known to need fresh recognition here, and Miss Swanborough never fails to throw force and pathos into the character of the wife. Many other actors and actresses well known to London playgoers are also in the country—Miss Bateman, Mr. Barry Sullivan, &c.

IN PARIS.

By far the most important event to be chronicled this month is the revival at the Comédie Française of *Ruy Blas*. It is now too late in the day to advert to the history or the dramatic effectiveness of this play, which, although not seen on the French stage since 1872, when it was represented at the Odéon, is recognised on all hands as one of M. Victor Hugo's finest works. In almost all respects the acting is worthy of the traditions of the theatre. In the revival we have just mentioned, Mdlle. Bernhardt, then comparatively unknown, represented the Queen; but it was reserved for the present performance to prove how thorough her grasp of the character is. In the second act, where the warmheartedness of the woman is exhibited in contrast with the icy stiffness of Spanish etiquette, and in the third, where her avowal of love for Ruy Blas does not induce her to forget that she is queen, the performance almost sets description at defiance. Ruy Blas, of course, is played by M. Mounet-Sully. Those who have come to regard him as an actor of an incurably extravagant style will be agreeably surprised by the quiet force of his declaration to the Queen; and it is worthy of note that the great scene with Don Salluste, which offers so many temptations to violence of speech and manner, is sustained with a vigour which never deviates into rant. The effect of the quiet sarcasm—

“Tenez !

Pour un homme d'esprit, vraiment, vous m'étonnez !”

can hardly be suggested. M. Febvre is such a Don Salluste as Velasquez would have set before us; and Mdlle. Baretta, as Casilda, criticise the king's letter with exquisite force. M. Coquelin scarcely realizes the idea of Don Cesar, but this is the only blemish in a performance which for general excellence and harmony has but seldom been surpassed.

The Théâtre Historique, now called the Théâtre des Nations, was re-opened by M. Bertrand, the dramatic critic, with *Camille Desmoulins*, a play in five acts, by M. Emile Moreau. The hero, it need hardly be said, is the pamphleteer and journalist of the

revolutionary epoch, and a sufficient idea of the plot of the piece will be conveyed if we say that the author departs in scarcely one instance from historical truth. Contrary to expectation, the author's sympathies are clearly against the revolutionists, the consequence being that, instead of applauding, the gallery found it necessary to hiss. M. Achard and Mdlle. Leblanc impersonated Camille and Lucille, but no acting could have saved so ill-constructed and feebly-written a piece from condemnation. The Porte-Saint-Martin revived *La Dame de Monsoreau*, so well remembered in connexion with the name of Mélingue. The acting of M. Lafontaine as Chicot cannot be deemed inferior to that of his illustrious predecessor; high praise, perhaps, but not undeserved. The latest novelty at the Odéon is a five-act drama in verse, *Le Marquis de Kénilis*, by M. Charles Lomon, whose maiden effort, *Jean Dacier*, proved so successful at the Théâtre Français about two years ago. The author, as in his previous play, selects the first Revolution as the background of his picture. Even if he had surpassed his previous achievement this would have been doubtful policy, and it unfortunately happens that *Le Marquis de Kénilis* displays a want of interest which, if we did not know that the piece was written before *Jean Dacier*, might lead us to augur unfavourably as to M. Lomon's chances as a dramatist in the future. M. Pujol, Mdlle. Jullien, and M. Porel are in the cast, but the piece will not long remain in the affiches.

Let us now turn to entertainments of a lighter character. The Opéra Comique, to begin with, has revived *La Flûte Enchantée*, and the old theory that Mozart intended to glorify in it the principles of the great Revolution has again been started. If a man so exclusively devoted to art knew even the outline of those principles it would be a matter of wonder. Madame Carvalho, as Pamina, is, as before, beyond comparison, while Mdlle. Bilbaut-Vauchelet is much better as the Queen of Night than could have been anticipated. In *La Petite Mademoiselle*, a new comic opera by M. Lecocq and MM. Meilhac and Halévy, the manager of the Renaissance has achieved yet another success. The score, indeed, is not so original and effective as in other works from the same pen, and the story, which takes us back to the days of the Fronde, is somewhat uninteresting. There was, however, enough in *La Petite Mademoiselle* to gain a favourable verdict. The burden of the piece falls upon Mdlle. Granier and M. Vauthier, both of whom deserve high praise. The Vaudeville has brought out M. Gondinet's new comedy, *Les Tapageurs*, the groundwork of which is substantially the same as that of *Montjoye*, and which, in spite of some very effective acting by M. Dupuis, Mdlle. Bartet, and M. Paul Berton, has fallen rather flat.

IN BERLIN.

THE Royal Playhouse produced on the 20th March a new work by Herr Hugo Bürger, the author of *Gabriele* and *Der Frauenadvocat*. The new play is a comedy in four acts, entitled *Die Frau ohne*

Geist, and achieved a very marked success. The central figure is a young girl of wealth and beauty, but generally regarded as not largely endowed with intellect. She marries an author, who shares the general opinion as to her lack of ability, but soon obtains convincing proof that he is mistaken in this respect. Jealousy draws out the latent capacity of the young wife, and the scenes in which her character is developed are highly effective, and show the dramatic power of Herr Bürger in a very favourable light. The fortunes of three other couples are loosely connected with those of the heroine and her husband, and the fundamental defect of the new comedy is a superabundance of action, a defect which German critics are disposed to condone, as the national dramatists of the day generally err in the contrary direction. Fräulein Meyer achieved a fresh success in the title-part, which she played naturally and gracefully, displaying moreover a creative power which has not been apparent in her rendering of tragic rôles. Herr Ludwig was excellent as the husband, and, not to name all the minor parts, Herr Liedtcke played a war correspondent with great comic effect. The comedy has been repeated several times with increasing success, and will probably be played twice a week for some time to come, the admirable system of the Royal Playhouse not admitting of a continuous long run. The only other novelty of the month was a one-act comedy by Count Ulrich Baudissen, entitled *Fünfundzwanzigtausend Thaler*, a tedious duologue, which not even the finished skill of Frau Frieb-Blumauer and Herr Oberlaender could render attractive. A revival of Raupach's entertaining piece, *Vor Hundert Jahren*, followed the comedietta, and restored the audience to good humour. Frau Olga Lewinsky played at the end of her engagement the leading parts in Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans* and *Kabale und Liebe*. These performances do not appear to have resulted, as had been expected, in a permanent engagement, though the lady would unquestionably be a valuable accession to the strength of the company.

At the Residenz Theater, Frau Wolter, the great tragic actress of Vienna, has been starring in such pieces as *Arria und Messalina*, *Eine vornehme Ehe* (*La Tentation* of M. Octave Feuillet), and *Marie Anne, oder Ein Weib aus dem Volke* (Messrs. Dennery and Mallian). She was most successful in the last-named piece, representing with extraordinary power the unhappy woman who is compelled by the conduct of her drunken husband to part with her child, and when she seeks to recover the child is sent to a lunatic asylum. Her tragic intensity in certain scenes was well-nigh appalling. Alternately with this melodrama was given the *Fourchambault*, which is approaching its 100th representation.

AFTER many failures, which compelled the Wallner Theater to fall back again and again upon the successful *Doctor Klaus*, that merry house at last achieved a new success at the end of March by the production of a farcical-comedy by Herr Jacobsohn entitled *Die Lachtaube*, which abounds in lively situations and contains some effective sketches of low life in Hamburg, the local tone of which was well caught by the company, Fräulein Ernestine Wegener and Herr Engels being especially successful in exciting

the mirth of the audience. At the Stadt Theater, Fräulein Haverland, who has left the Royal Playhouse, appeared at the end of March in Grillparzer's *Medea*, playing the more passionate scenes with great effect, and as Conradine in Mosenthal's *Deutsche Komödianten*, a part less suited to her powers. The Ostend Theater has given with ill-success a new tragedy by Frau Bredow-Görne, entitled *Hypatia*, and founded upon Kingsley's well-known novel. The French company at the Saal Theater have unwisely essayed *Dora*, in which they fell far short of the interpretation of the German version at the Residenz Theater. On the other hand, they have given *Nos Intimes* with success.

IN VIENNA.

A COMEDY in four acts, by Herr Roderich Anschütz, entitled *Die Ehestifter*, was the only new production at the Burgtheater during the past month. A banker, who has been twice married, has a daughter by each marriage. The elder, Auguste has given her affections to her father's bookkeeper, but their union is delayed by the determination of the second wife that her own daughter shall be married before her stepdaughter. Auguste and her lover, therefore, make strenuous efforts to find a husband for Seraphine, the younger daughter, but that young lady is hard to please and will listen to the suit of no man who has loved before. At last a likely suitor is found in a certain Baron, who has led a fast life but pretends to be a perfect innocent. He, however, mistakes the elder for the younger sister, and the former, who is a whimsical girl, does not undeceive him, but enters with zest into the game of deceiving the deceiver. After making a declaration of love to Auguste, the Baron transfers his affections to Seraphine, and acts in such a free-and-easy manner that he is ordered out of the house. He refuses to go, and after a number of absurd scenes in which the comedy degenerates into farce, the piece concludes with the removal of the impediment which prevented the marriage of Auguste and the bookkeeper. "And this," writes a well-known critic, "is called a German comedy, in which there is nothing German but the possibility of its being written, produced, and applauded in a German country." The applause was mainly due to the acting, which was in every respect worthy of the leading theatre of Vienna. Frau Hartmann, as Auguste, played with great spirit and effect, making a decided hit in the scene with the Baron, in which she was ably supported by Herr Hartmann. Herren Baumeister, Thimig, and Schöne, were excellent in other parts. During the month Shakspeare's *Henry IV.*, parts one and two, and *Henry V.* were performed. The house was closed from the 6th to the 13th of April for the Easter vacation, and reopened on the 14th with the *Winter's Tale*.

At the Stadt-Theater the novelties of the month consist of a three-act farcical comedy, and three or four one-act pieces. The three-act piece, entitled *Ein verhängnissvolles Bild*, and written by Herr Adolph Schirmer, excited much mirth. The picture in question is that of a student whose feminine features have led an artist

to represent him in woman's clothes ; the likeness passes from hand to hand, and when the young man appears amongst strangers in his own costume, he is suspected of being a woman in disguise, and this gives rise to incidents more amusing than decent. The humorous acting of Herr Bukovics had much to do with the success of the piece. A one-act comediotta by Herr Schlesinger, entitled *Vogelfrei*, containing many amusing hits at Russian policy, was very successful, Herr Tyrolt playing with much comic effect a Russian official who scents conspiracy and Nihilism in everything. Another little piece from the same pen, entitled *Der Kopf auf dem Bilde*, was also successful, satirizing effectively some of the artistic follies of the day. Two short works from the pen of Herr Julius Rosen were less satisfactory, and hardly require notice in our limited space. At the end of March, the Stadtheater adopted into its repertory the *Gendre de M. Poirier* of Messrs. Augier & Sandeau, under the title of *Der Vornehme Schwiegersohn* ; and though Herr Bassermann was hardly equal to the difficult character of the Marquis de Presles, the comedy produced its unfailing effect. Herr Tyrolt was fairly good as M. Poirier, and Frau Albrecht was quite good as Antoinette.

At the Carl Theater nothing calls for notice but the production of a German version of the *Coco* of Messrs. Clairville, Grangé & Delacour, the hero of which is a parrot bequeathed by will to the mayor of a small town, coupled with an annuity of 20,000 francs as long as he should keep the bird safe and sound. The parrot is let loose by one of the disappointed next of kin of the testator, and the bird is vainly pursued throughout the three acts by the mayor and his friends to the total neglect of the functions of his office. Herr Knaack and his merry colleagues played this absurdity with so much *verve* as to gain for it a very favourable reception.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

In Milan, the weeks preceding Easter were dull as usual from a theatrical point of view. La Scala closed on the 1st April a season, which compares favourably with those of recent years, with a very fine performance of Verdi's *Don Carlos*. The only novelty produced during the latter part of the season was the *Maria Tudor* of Signor Gomes, the Brazilian composer, whose *Guarany* and *Fosca* have attained great success on the Italian stage. His new opera has had a very different fate ; a well-disposed audience grew adverse as the performance proceeded, and the last act was frequently interrupted by outbursts of disapprobation, nor has the work met with a more favourable reception at the hands of the critics. At the end of the dramatic season, the Manzoni Theatre produced *Don Giovanni* with such an inefficient operatic company that the first performance was the last, and the house remained closed till Easter. The only theatres that remained open during the early part of April were the Milanese, with its somewhat monotonous repertory of pieces in the Piedmontese dialect ; the Fossati, with a fairly good light operatic company, which, in addition to the familiar

works of Offenbach and Lecocq, produced some less known specimens of the native opera *buffa*, such as the antiquated *Columella* of Fioravanti, which contains a very effective chorus of madmen; two minor houses, which need not be named, complete the list. For some years past Milan has been deprived of the enjoyment which it used to derive from the annual visit of a good French company. The French comedians who have recently visited Italy have not maintained the histrionic fame of their country, and have been far from equal to the better Italian troupes. This spring, however, Italy has enjoyed the performances of the very efficient French artistes composing the Carrier-Rey company, who, after successful visits to Turin, Florence, Naples, and Rome, opened their season at the Manzoni Theatre in Milan on Easter day. Their programme is varied and attractive, ranging from such works as the *Demi-Monde* and the *Marquis de Villemér* to Lecocq's *Petit Duc* and Hennequin's *Niniche*. Their opening bill comprised *La Cigale*, which was well acted, but did not achieve the success which it had attained at the Valle Theatre in Rome. On the other hand, *Le Petit Duc*, which was given on Easter Monday, gained a perfect triumph, Mdme. Brigny-Varney as the Duke, Mdme. Rey as the Duchess, and Mdme. Jaume, as the schoolmistress, being especially good, while the *ensemble* was excellent. On the following day, as if to prove their versatility, the company gave with marked success M. Dumas's *Demi-Monde*, in which Mdme. Clarence gained the approval even of those who could remember the Baronne d'Ange of the inimitable Desclée. M. Molina, though physically unsuited to the part of Olivier de Jalin, played it with discretion, and M. Manin was a natural and effective Najac. On the whole the performance was such as to make the audience look forward with pleasure to the promised representations of the *Marquis de Villemér*, the *Fils Naturel*, and other works of that class.

In Rome, Signor Salvini began a short series of performances at Easter at the Argentina Theatre, playing with his usual success the leading parts in Voltaire's *Zaïre*, in *La Morte Civile*, *Francesca da Rimini*, and the *Saul* of Alfieri. He was well supported by Signora Andreani, an actress of promise.

IN MADRID.

THE early part of the theatrical season came to an end in the first week of April, and its last weeks were not fruitful in novelties of importance. Of the productions at the Teatro Español we need only name a new historical drama by Señor Cabiedes, entitled *Cruz y Corona*, the plot of which turns upon the religious conflict which resulted in the dethronement of King Sancho II. of Portugal. As the struggle is between the king and the Church, and there is no conflict between individual passions, the subject does not lend itself well to dramatic treatment, and as the qualities of Señor Cabiedes are rather those of a lyrical poet than of a dramatist, the piece proved uninteresting, and the strenuous efforts of Don Rafael Calvo and Señor Jimenez failed to gain for it a favourable hearing,

though the literary merits of the drama are by no means inconsiderable. The Teatro de la Comedia produced before Easter several works of ephemeral interest, the only one that attained much success being a comedy in two acts in verse by Don Eduardo Butillos, entitled *Razon de Estado*, which treats in a lively manner the not very novel theme that it is unwise for a newly-married man to live with his wife's parents and other relations. One member of the household is a first-cousin of the wife, a hypocritical young scapegrace, whose misdoings are invariably imputed to the husband. The truth comes out in the end, but the husband has had a serious lesson, and resolves to take a house for himself. The piece was acted with much vivacity by Señores Zamacois, Romea, and Aguirre, and Señoras Fernandez, Valverde, Ballesteros, and Mendoza. At the same theatre a very welcome event occurred at the end of March in the successful *début* of two prize pupils of the National School of Declamation, who promise to be valuable recruits to the rather scanty band of Spanish actors. For the *début* of Señor Santiago, Don Ventura de la Vega had prepared, under the title *Quiero ser Cómico*, a Spanish version of the French comedy *Je serai Comédien* which introduces fragments of various kinds of plays, and thus gave the beginner an opportunity of displaying his aptitude for tragedy, comedy, and drama. The young man gave proof of considerable versatility. He also appeared with great success in *Asirse de un Cabello*, a translation of M. Octave Feuillet's one-act comedy *Le Cheveu Blanc*, a duologue, in which the other part was played with great effect by his fellow-pupil, Señorita Gorriz. This young lady had at the beginning of the present season played secondary parts at the Teatro Español without attracting any attention; but on the present occasion she produced such a favourable impression that her career will henceforth be watched with interest. The Teatro de la Zarzuela has produced with great success a comedy in three acts, interspersed with music, entitled *La Guerra Santa*. The piece is a clever adaptation to the stage of M. Jules Verne's *Michael Trogoff*, by Señores Larra and Escrich; but the music, by Señor Arrieta, is rather commonplace and little suited to the dramatic vigour of the story. The success was, however, so marked that the piece retained its place on the bills when the house re-opened at Easter. All the theatres, except the Teatro Real, resumed work at Easter, when the Teatro Español produced with success a new tragic drama by Don José Echegaray, entitled *En el Seno de la Muerte*, of which lack of space compels us to postpone our notice.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

THE allegation that cultured persons have ceased to go to the play continues to be at variance with facts. Last month Mr. Gladstone went twice to the Lyceum to see *Hamlet*, and one night Mr. Tennyson was observed to applaud Mr. Irving's performance with particular warmth.

THREE or four weeks ago an effort was made to induce the Lord Chamberlain to allow the Comédie Française to play what they liked in London. His lordship has passed the whole of the proposed repertoire except the *Demi-Monde* and *La Supplique d'une Femme*, in the place of which we are to have *Ruy Blas*.

THE Princess Louise (Marchioness of Lorne), is painting a portrait of Mrs. Scott-Siddons, who was recently her guest at Rideau Hall, Canada.

THE *Times*, in speaking of the acting in the first performance of the *Lady of Lyons*, simply said, "Macready acted with spirit, and so did Miss Faucit, though she occasionally overdid the part. Poor Elton (Beau-séant, had only to look disagreeable." No other performance was mentioned.

MR. EDWIN BOOTH, while playing *Richard III.*, at Chicago, on the night of the 23rd April, was twice fired at by a man in the front of the house, but was not wounded. He coolly indicated his assailant, who on being seized admitted that he wished to kill the actor.

It is highly probable that Mr. Booth will appear with Mr. Irving in two or three pieces at the Lyceum Theatre, London, next year.

As Mr. Walter Baynham remarked in our last issue, even practised players are not free from "stage-fright." On the first night of *Ruy Blas* Mdlle. Bernhardt trembled violently, especially in the second act. "Grands Dieux!" exclaimed Mdlle. Baretta, "ne tremblez pas donc comme ça; vous me donnez une peur terrible."

M. GOUNOD complimented M. Febvre in technical language. "Votre rôle," said the composer, "est en mineur. C'est la symphonie du mal et de la haine." He may have done so unconsciously, for he knows M. Febvre to be an excellent musician.

M. HUGO lately celebrated his seventy-eighth birthday by a little dinner in the Café Riche in Paris, to which he was invited by a few old friends. He appeared to be in robust health, and spoke with his usual vigour and point. Among the guests were M. Louis Blanc and M. Schoelcher, some relatives of fellow proscriptions who are no more, some members of the Senate pledged to vote an unconditional amnesty, and the principal members of the *Rappel's* staff.

MADAME PATTI will spend a portion of the summer at Craig-y-nos Castle, Bridgend, the residence she purchased last year. It is an old and romantic building, and might well have been selected by Charlotte Brontë and Mr. Wilkie Collins as the scene of such dark mysterious occurrences as they like to imagine.

MR. SUGDEN had to leave the Prince of Wales's Theatre soon after the case of *Desart v. Desart* and Sugden was heard. "I am not a Joseph," Mr. Bancroft is reported to have said to him; "but really, my dear fellow, I have received so many letters about this business that I think you had better bid us good-bye for the present."

THERE appears to be a good deal of anxiety in Paris as to the safety of the Comédie Française during their voyage across the Channel. Suppose that the boat went down with all on board! One playgoer suggests in a newspaper that the company should go over in sections, and that the English manager should insure their lives for at least six millions of francs.

WHILE the *Corsican Brothers* is in the bills at the Lyceum Theatre Miss Ellen Terry will go on a provincial tour with her husband.

M. ALBERT WOLFF, of the *Figaro*, recently wrote an article in which some jocularly at the expense of Mlle. Bernhardt was indulged in. "Il m'a fallu tous ces jours passés," wrote the actress to the critic, "pour oublier votre méchante humeur, cher Monsieur Wolff, mais je ne puis oublier votre esprit, et je vous remercie d'en avoir fait si grande dépense à propos de moi.—Aimablement, SARAH BERNHARDT."

SHORTLY before her departure from the United States Madame Gerster was the guest of the President and Mrs. Hayes at the White House.

THE lease of Her Majesty's Theatre has been purchased by Mr. Mapleson of Lord Dudley.

DURING Grisi's palmy days in London it was usual for the fashionable local papers to chronicle in advance each recurring annual event in her domestic circle with unflinching regularity. Prior to the last of these interesting occasions the *Post* contained the following news paragraph: "Contrary to her usual custom, Madame Grisi will not, as in previous years, retire from her professional duties in April, the auspicious necessity being likely to occur early in May of the present year."

THERE will shortly be a performance at the Lyceum Theatre for the benefit of Mr. Marston.

THE *Revue et Gazette des Théâtres*, of Paris, tells us in a short paragraph that Madame Seïna-Dolaro has taken the direction of the Jolly Theatre in London; that Misses Jarren and Kate Waughan form the delights of the Gaité; and that "Le Bossu" has been given at the Adelphe by Mlle. Adelaide Neilson and Lydia Zoote.

A PORTRAIT of Mr. Blanchard is to be placed by the side of that of Mr. Oxenford in the Junior Garrick Club.

THE recent revival at the Renaissance of *Les Rendez-vous Bourgeois*

was decided upon and accomplished in eight days. "Such promptitude is really astonishing," somebody remarked to M. Koning. "Not at all," was the reply; "the authors are dead."

WE are given to understand that among the verbal jokes with which Mr. Byron intends to enrich a dialogue when the chance presents itself are that drummer-boys are at a discount because they cross the Styx at an early age; that the best of all *alibis* is to dodge down a back lane to escape a creditor; that the poet who wrote, "Oh, ask me not again," must have had his *quantum*.

MR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN and Mr. Cellier are composing for the Alhambra an opera, on Anderssen's story of the "Little Mermaid."

THE London *Figaro* is publishing excellent descriptions of the plots of the plays about to be performed at the Gaiety by the Comédie Française.

MR. VERNON will shortly produce Mr. Evelyn Jerrold's new comedy, *Cæsar's Wife*.

IN reference to a statement in the last number of *The Theatre*, Mrs. Cameron requests us to state that her daughter, Miss Violet Cameron, is only sixteen years of age.

M. SARDOU is writing a drama in which the Revolution forms the background.

A NEW Italian Opera House is to be erected in the Rue Castiglione.

M. PAUL DÉROULÈDE, the author of the *Hetman*, has written for the Odéon a four-act play on a Biblical subject, *La Moabite*.

M. D'ENNERV and M. Brésil are writing for the Ambigu a new drama, in which M. Lacrosonnière will appear.

BJÖRNSTERN BJÖRNSSON'S new drama, *Leonarda*, is to be produced very shortly at Christiania, Stockholm, and Copenhagen, and is being translated for Vienna and Munich.

MISS CLARA MORRIS has been staying at her pretty residence at Riverdale, on the Hudson, before commencing her spring tour.

It is not yet certain whether Mr. Lester Wallack will play at the California Theatre. He is very fond of yachting, and as he owns one of the prettiest and fastest boats of the New York Yacht Club, the Columbia, he feels averse to losing six weeks of his favourite summer recreation, and in the winter he cannot absent himself from his own theatre. Should he go, it will be in July.

THERE has been a good deal of commotion at San Francisco. Miss Eytinge, in a moment of anger, called the manager of Baldwin's Theatre a nigger. The latter is proceeding against her for slander, and the damages are laid at \$10,000.

THE train in which Madame Modjeska recently left New York left the line for a time. Mr. Winter says it was only a locomotive puff.

MISS CLARA LOUISE KELLOGG has sold her country home, Clarehurst, near Cold Springs, on the Hudson.

Literature.

THE FRENCH STAGE.*

EARLY in June the sociétaires of the Comédie Française will be amongst us, and the interest excited by the announcement of their coming is so deep that any book relating to the history of the French stage may be expected to find many readers. Three such works have just appeared:—Mrs. Oliphant and Mr. Tarver provide us with a new monograph on Molière, Mr. Baillie Cochrane narrates a story in which Mdlle. Clairon is introduced, and Mr. Walter Pollock prints the lectures he delivered at the Royal Institution on romanticism and its most prominent representatives. It is devoutly to be hoped that the first and second of these works will escape our visitors' notice. For some time past the errors made by French authors in writing English have formed a fruitful theme of merriment among London journalists. They smile with an air of good-tempered pity when a Parisian puts "Sir" where "Mr." ought to be; they giggle on being told that M. Victor Hugo has called the Firth of Forth the "première de la quatrième;" they roar outright when the unhappy *Figaro* refers to Sir Bartle Frere as the firm of Bartle Brothers; they have to be thumped in the back when the title of Cibber's comedy *Love's Last Shift* is translated "La Dernière Chemise de l'Amour." They indignantly scout the idea that any Englishman could make such blunders in writing French. Their laughter, it may nevertheless be suggested, is a little too loud. In this respect, as in many others, we live in a glass house, and should not be in a hurry to throw stones. Mrs. Oliphant and Mr. Baillie Cochrane are educated writers, but are apparently unable at times to catch the meaning of a French expression or see that the French they quote is incorrectly printed. The lady, in dealing with *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, gives "I have run the risk of seeing" as a translation of "Je suis tombé dans la disgrâce de voir." The Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon is invariably referred to as the "Hôtel de Petit Bourbon." But Mrs. Oliphant's French is blameless in comparison with Mr. Cochrane's. If a copy of the *Théâtre Français under Louis XV.* should find its way into the players' library in the

* *Molière.* By Mrs. Oliphant and F. Tarver, M.A. *Foreign Classics for English Readers.* Blackwood.

The Théâtre Français under Louis XV. By A. Baillie Cochrane, M.P. Hurst and Blackett.

Lectures on French Poets. By Walter H. Pollock. Kegan, Paul, & Co.

Rue Richelieu no limit can be set to the mirth it will provoke. Three extracts from *Polyeucte* are given :

C'est beaucoup qu'une femme autrefois tant aimée
Donne à votre grand cœur ce qu'elle a de plus cher.

Again,—

Heureux attachemens de la chair et du monde.

Lastly,—

Allez, *bonheur* *plaisirs*, qui me livrez la guerre.

If we read “doive” for “donne,” “honteux” for “heureux,” and, in the third extract, “Allez, honneurs, plaisirs qui me livrez la guerre,” the author’s meaning will be clear. Then the Don Gomès of the *Cid* is referred to as De Gomès, Madeleine Bejart as “Begart,” the Orosmane in Voltaire’s *Zaire* as Orismane, a tragedy suggested by the fate of the last of Queen Elizabeth’s favourites as “Le Conte d’Essex,” Du Croisy as “De Croisy.” In an extract from Molière a character is made to say: “Souffle que j’espère;” the impressive words of St. Louis to his son are misquoted so far as to be almost unrecognizable, and Mdle. Clairon declares that she will atone for “ce que j’aurai fait de répréhensive.” Had such blunders occurred in a periodical publication there would have been some excuse for them; as it is, seeing that Mr. Cochrane had the chance of carefully revising his proofs, we must perforce come to the conclusion that his French needs rubbing up.

Molière’s plays are characterized by almost unrivalled humour and knowledge of human nature, and accomplished for French comedy even more than Corneille and Racine accomplished for tragedy. Mrs. Oliphant and Mr. Tarver seem to be fully sensible of his merits, and their criticism on his chief plays is keen and discriminating. But this is really all that can be said in praise of their book. Their knowledge of the subject they are dealing with is assuredly inadequate. “Up to the time when Richelieu’s patronage revived or created some taste for theatrical performances in France,” they say, “the national drama had been represented by heavy tragedies on classical subjects, or the buffooneries which are more or less indigenous in all countries, which seem to have everywhere succeeded the rude Mysteries of (? or) Miracle Plays, but which had developed under the special patronage of Italian humour into a characteristic and distinct branch of primitive art.” How a primitive art can be “developed” from two antecedent forms we are not told; but let that pass. The great majority of the tragedies produced in Paris before Richelieu’s time were by no means classical, as even a cursory glance at those described by Parfaict will show. Then, although the *commedia dell’arte* found favour in France, many comedies were of a distinctly national character, and to a certain extent prepared the way for such a

piece as *Le Menteur* of Corneille. But even as regards Molière himself our authors' stock of information is very small. They base their monograph upon the once well-known works of M. Moland and M. Bazin, and are evidently unaware that since the publication of those works many interesting discoveries as to the author of *Tartuffe* have been made by M. Soulié and other enthusiasts. Had our authors conscientiously read up their subject they would not have asserted that Molière was born in a house known as the *Maison des Cygnes*, studied under Gassendi at the Collège de Clermont, or was ever known as De Molière. They would have known, too, that it is not "hopeless to attempt to trace" his career as a strolling player, inasmuch as a good deal of light has recently been thrown upon it. In dealing with his life in Paris they fall into more errors. The Théâtre du Marais was not removed to the Hôtel du Petit Bourbon, which, we believe, was pulled down as early as 1660. The *Festin de Pierre*, as Lagrange's *Registre* proves, was by no means "unpopular," and from the edition printed at Amsterdam in 1683 it will be seen that the play *did* "see the light in its integrity" before 1819. Mrs. Oliphant and Mr. Tarver also sin in the way of omission. *Amphitryon*, on reading which Voltaire fell out of his chair through laughter, is curiously passed over; *Psyche*, composed by Molière and le grand Corneille, is not mentioned at all. In the account of Molière's early days no illustrations of the life of a country actor of the seventeenth century are given, although Scarron's *Roman Comique* affords all the requisite materials. But little is said of Molière's private character, and for any information as to his personal appearance and talents as an actor the reader must go elsewhere. In some of their conclusions Mrs. Oliphant and Mr. Tarver yet further betray their ignorance of the subject on which they undertake to enlighten us. They sternly censure Molière on account of the angry spirit displayed in the *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* and the *Impromptu de Versailles*, but do not point out that these works were written in reply to personal attacks of as cruel and stinging a nature as can well be imagined.

Irrespective of the blunders already noticed, Mr. Cochrane's work is directly calculated to lower the reputation of English letters. In the first place, as we think, a want of candour is shown in his choice of a title. "The Théâtre Français under Louis XV." would lead any one to expect that the author intended to relate the whole or a part of the history of the French stage between 1723 and 1774. That history, it need hardly be said, is full of interest. In the course of the half-century we have indicated Voltaire and some of the most noted of his contemporaries wrote for the theatre;

and a race of great players—Baron, Adrienne Lecouvreur, Quinault-Dufresne, Jeanne Gaussin, Marie Dumesnil, Hippolyte Clairon, Le Kain, Prévile, Molé, and Brizard—successively illuminated the scene. In the triumphs and failures of these dramatists and players, to say nothing of the romances of real life exhibited in the annals of the stage and the conditions under which some pieces were produced, more than one writer has found materials for a fascinating book. Moreover, good literary capital might be made of the constitution in the last century of the Théâtre Français, the persecution which the players suffered at the hands of the priesthood, the practical opposition of three or four dramatists to the ordinances of the “classical” school of composition, and the ever-increasing favour with which plays of an anti-monarchical and anti-religious tendency were received as the reign of Louis XV. drew to its close. But, apart from the constitution of the Théâtre Français and the hostile attitude of the Church towards the stage, Mr. Cochrane does not touch even the fringe of the subject indicated by the name of his book. He concerns himself almost exclusively with the fortunes of a young girl who gains a livelihood by selling flowers near the Tuileries, is rescued from the clutches of a savage step-mother by a woman of generous sympathies and cultivated tastes, becomes a distinguished actress at the Maison de Molière, and soon afterwards dies. Some of the theatrical surroundings of the girl are dealt with, but the light thrown upon the stage at the period of the story—the middle of the last century—is at best very faint. “The Théâtre Français under Louis XV.,” in fact, is a misnomer, and, seeing that it conveys an exaggerated notion of the scope and interest of the work, should not, in fairness to the reading public, have been used. Mr. Cochrane, too, would have done well to state that the story of the flower-girl—which in itself, we may here say, will more than repay perusal—is founded upon fact; indeed, had we not heard of a certain Mdle. Laballe, who appeared at the Théâtre Français in 1748 with conspicuous success, only to die in the following year, we might—attributing his silence on the point to modesty—have given him the credit of inventing it. The blunders he makes are so numerous that a good deal of our space might be occupied in pointing them out. Louis XIV. was not alive when Baron returned to the stage, and Mr. Cochrane is wide of the mark in supposing that a nephew of that illustrious actor was an ornament of the Comédie Française at the same time as Mdle. Clairon. Instances of this inadequacy of information might be given, but enough has already been said to show how far Mr. Baillie Cochrane is qualified, at least for the present, to write about the French stage of the eighteenth century.

In Mr. Pollock's volume we have a valuable contribution to the history of the great dramatic revolution of 1830—the triumph of the romantic school over the classical. His lectures are on romanticism, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, and Béranger. The last is beside our purpose, but we cannot pass it over without recommending every student of song literature to read it. In only one respect is Mr. Pollock's work open to adverse criticism. He seems to be of opinion that the movement which culminated in the overthrow of the classical school of tragedy was originated by Madame de Staël. The history of the French drama shows that this is not the case. Romanticism was the animating principle of the majority of the plays brought out in Paris up to nearly the middle of the seventeenth century. The other school then came into fashion, but soon after the Regency romanticism was resuscitated by the spirit of change which came over the nation at that period, and finally led to the Revolution. Lamotte, Lachaussée, Diderot, and the author of the *Tableau de Paris* successively took the lists against the dogmas of the classicists. The cause of romanticism was unfavourably affected by the reaction induced by the excesses of the Revolution, but in the last years of the Restoration, thanks to Madame de Staël and one or two other writers, but still more, perhaps, to the study in Paris of Shakspeare and Goethe and Schiller, it suddenly acquired extraordinary strength. From this time Mr. Pollock may be followed with equal profit and pleasure. "Old as I am," Talma remarked shortly before his death to a young writer, "I have never really played a part. Our tragedies are very splendid, and noble and grand; I should have liked as much grandeur, and more reality. I should have liked a character which had all the variety and movement of human life instead of being cast in one stiff mould." The young writer was Victor Hugo, who soon afterwards published his *Cromwell* with a preface to the effect that Shakspeare was the god of the theatre. Then followed the *Henry III.* of Dumas, also a convert to romanticism. The standard of rebellion was now fairly raised; the capital seemed to be divided into two hostile camps, and the relative merits and demerits of the two schools of writing were fiercely discussed. In February, 1830, when *Hernani* was produced, extraordinary excitement prevailed. The play was received with mingled groans and cheers, and the curtain did not fall until an unusually late hour. This scene was repeated for forty-five nights, after which victory inclined to the side of the innovators. In the heat of controversy, as may be supposed, each party made itself supremely ridiculous. Neither could have given an accurate definition of the principle it was contending for. Alfred de Musset—at first an ardent

romancist—indulged in some exquisite pleasantry at the expense of both. He could discern that the two schools had merits peculiar to themselves, and might be happily united. Mr. Pollock discusses the points at issue with similar impartiality. The classical tragedies were romantic because they violated the unity of time; the romantic plays were classical because the characters spoke in verse. Having regard to the character of the most successful French dramas of recent years, we think with Mr. Pollock—who, it should be added, comments upon the plays of Victor Hugo and Musset with great discrimination—that the time has come for a new romantic school to arise.

PLAYERS OF THE DAY.*

DRAMATIC critics are only mortal, however much they are inclined to demur to so startling an assumption. They may be visited by some of the ills that flesh is proverbially heir to; they are not superior to the weakness of availing themselves of a decent excuse for putting a goodly number of miles between themselves and this busy metropolis. In their absence it is deemed expedient to fill up their places, and the errors made by their substitutes are often appalling. Last autumn, for example, a daily newspaper, in criticising the revival of *A Winter's Tale*, spoke of Miss Wallis as an actress entirely new to the London stage. Had a copy of the book now before us been in the office of that unfortunate journal the blunder might have been avoided. Mr. Pascoe's work, in fact, meets a want long experienced by those who may be called upon at short notice to write a theatrical critique. The dramatic part is a collection of biographical sketches of living players, together with extracts from thoughtful criticisms upon noteworthy performances. The task of the author has not been light, and has been discharged with much judgment and impartiality. He has, however, fallen into some errors in the way of both commission and omission. It is easy to understand why memoirs of actors so recently deceased as Mr. Mathews and Mr. Phelps are to be found in the book, but as Mr. Edmund Phelps died nine years ago we scarcely expected to see his name in a list of players living in 1879. Remembering, too, that Mr. Pascoe gives us some account of young and almost untried actors, we think he ought not to have ignored the existence of Mr. Warner and Mr. Vernon. But in the second edition, no doubt, all this will be set right.

* *The Dramatic List: Living Actors and Actresses of the British Stage.*
By C. E. Pascoe: Hardwicke & Bogue.

Correspondence.

LORD NEWRY AND MR. MONTAGUE.

THE attention of my client Lord Newry has just been called to the libellous article contained in your number of the 1st of February, which is as follows :—

“ Lord Newry, as we announced two months ago, obtained a judgment against the estate of the late Mr. H. J. Montague for the rent of the Globe Theatre, and enjoined a life insurance company from paying the actor's mother the amount of a policy which he had taken out in her favour. The consequent anxiety has proved fatal to Mrs. Mann, the mother, who was seventy years of age. Lord Newry's reflections can hardly be pleasant.”

1. It is not true that Lord Newry obtained a judgment against the estate of the late Mr. H. J. Montague for the rent of the Globe Theatre. The judgment was obtained as far back as the 18th August, 1875.

2. It is not true that Lord Newry enjoined a life insurance company from paying the actor's mother the amount of a policy which he had taken out in her favour. Not only has his lordship never enjoined the life insurance company from paying the actor's mother the amount of the policy, but neither he nor I, his legal adviser, have ever known the name of the insurance company in question. The facts are simply as follows :—

Upon it appearing in the Press that the late Mr. H. J. Montague had died leaving a considerable fortune, partly represented by consols in England, I gave notice to the executors of the deceased of the judgment obtained by Lord Newry in 1875, and at the same time entered a caveat for the purpose of preventing proof of the will in England without notice to my client, and I also gave notice of the judgment to the gentlemen who were the solicitors acting for Mr. Montague in England in 1875. Those gentlemen wrote me to the effect that instead of Mr. Montague having left a fortune, he had only left about 3,000 dollars, and they also stated that some time prior to his leaving England he had effected a policy upon his life for the benefit of his mother, Mrs. Mann. I immediately communicated this letter to Lord Newry, who instructed me to take no further steps, as he did not want to interfere with such policy. No further steps were ever taken, and Lord Newry has no knowledge nor have I whether or not Mr. Montague's mother ever received the benefit of the policy. At any rate no application has ever been made to his lordship or to me upon the subject.

3. Having in the preceding part of your article made false charges, you proceed to draw your conclusions and to insinuate that the death of Mrs. Mann was in consequence of Lord Newry's conduct in enjoining the insurance company from paying her the policy. A more scandalous charge was never made.

No one who knows Lord Newry will believe your statements for a moment, but it is for the information of those who may have read your article and do not know his lordship and his proverbial generosity that I require the insertion of this letter in its entirety.

56, Pall Mall, April 16.

J. MORTIMER MADDIX.

* * The statement in question had been made in many other papers before it appeared in these pages. However, as it proves to be unfounded, we willingly express our regret for having inserted the paragraph.

The Theatre.

JUNE 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

THE VISIT OF THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.



WITHOUT desiring to trench in any way upon the prerogative of those whose duty it will shortly be to bestow extravagant praise upon all the performances at the Gaiety Theatre simply because they are given by French artists, we are anxious both to extend the heartiest of welcomes to our distinguished visitors, and to express our

conviction of the importance legitimately attaching to the present season of French plays in London. To the company presided over by M. Perrin and headed by M. Got we owe our earnest thanks for the goodwill towards us which has alone made such a visit possible; and we have every reason to recognise the tact with which Mr. Hollingshead, aided by M. Mayer, has conducted a daring and delicate enterprise to a happy issue. It is scarcely necessary to point out in how many significant particulars the season which commences with the current month at the Gaiety differs from its predecessors. Too often on previous occasions when French plays have been attempted in London, the company secured has been of the order described as "*Ma femme et quatre poupées.*" The star has been surrounded with sticks; and, to those inclined to a hasty estimate of the house from a sample-brick, opportunity has been given for an attack upon the incompleteness and lack of symmetry in French dramatic representations. As a necessary result it has followed that the repertoire attempted has either been as limited as that of the ordinary travelling troupe in our own provinces, or has been inadequately given where variety has been aimed at. The artists, on the other hand, whom Mr. Hollingshead's

three years' negotiation has induced to appear at the Gaiety form the whole company of the Théâtre Français. Their repertoire is by very far the strongest and most complete commanded by any management in Europe, and they will have in London every artistic advantage which would be theirs in Paris.

To all who have favourite French plays, or who are ambitious to play the rôle of *connoisseur*, it will of course be possible to find fault with the programme arranged by MM. Perrin and Mayer. But upon the whole it is certain that the selections made for these forty-two representations will be pronounced eminently judicious. Besides typical examples of contemporary dramatic work in France we are to have the comedies of Molière, the dramas of Corneille and Racine, Voltaire and Beaumarchais, performed as they could be by no other company in the world. It is not too much to say that *Le Misanthrope*, *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, *Tartuffe*, *Le Menteur*, *Zaïre*, *Les Plaideurs*, *Andromaque*, and *Le Barbier de Séville* given by a company which includes Got, Febvre, Coquelin, Delaunay, Mdles. Bernhardt and Croizette and Madame Favart will be to the listener a valuable phase of a liberal education. Popular in the sense that the excerpts from the works of more modern dramatists are these classical masterpieces will not be; but it cannot fail to be instructive to note how that which our stage world regards as the dry bones of the drama is endowed with vigorous vitality by the practised art of its interpreters.

Although the distinctive characteristics of the Comédie Française are brought out most vividly in their treatment of the national dramatic heirlooms, which would with us either be wholly neglected save in the study, or would be produced occasionally as a curious experiment, the keenest popular interest will naturally be aroused by the presentation of those new modern plays which are, or have recently been, the talk of cosmopolitan society. It is true that our English actors and actresses can, in the works of our living playwrights, show us art as finished, as refined, and as effective as any that can be exhibited at the Gaiety. The Prince of Wales's Theatre, the Court, and the Lyceum, all have, each in its own direction, a well-deserved reputation for dramatic culture, at least as excellent as any which can be exhibited in *L'Etrangère*, *Le Sphinx*, or *Le Fils Naturel*. The interest here will be found in studying the type of play which adapters have vainly striven to acclimatize in this country. The tardy official consent which has now promised to allow *Le Demi-Monde* to be played on our stage permits us to study Alexandre Dumas fils in some of his finest works; *La Joie fait Peur*, *Mercadet*, and *Le Gendre de M. Poirier* show M. Got in three rôles such as give this most

admirable actor an opportunity of displaying the full extent of his versatility; whilst Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt will prove herself what she undoubtedly is, the one first-rate tragedy-actress of the present day.

The playgoer then has every reason to look forward with eager interest to an intellectual treat which but for the enterprise of Mr. Hollingshead and the friendliness of M. Perrin he could never have enjoyed except in the course of a prolonged sojourn in the French capital. Setting aside all thoughts of comparison between the art of our visitors and that of our native players, since this fanciful mental process leads nowhere save in the direction of superficial prejudice, we have full reason to congratulate ourselves upon the temporary acquisition of a new field of intellectual enjoyment. Happily for the theatre-going portion of the community, French plays can be understood and appreciated by us as the drama of no other foreign language could be. A cursory perusal of each play beforehand will enable most people to comprehend it in representation, even though their actual command of current French dialogue may be limited; and this, by the way, may suggest to the management the desirability of offering facilities for the purchase of "books of the words" some time previous to each performance. It is a great thing for our drama, especially at this moment of its revival, that its supporters should be able, by observing the outcome of the most perfect dramatic organization in the world, to strengthen and to enlarge their view of histrionic excellence and its possibilities. The good which was in a necessarily limited and imperfect degree accomplished by the visit of the *Comédie Française* in 1871 will be far more effective now. We are ripe for the lesson to be so pleasantly conveyed; and there is at the present time a chance, such as there has never been before, that the admiration evoked by the histrionic efforts of the graduates of a noble school of dramatic art will lead us to inquire why, if we value the results of the teaching, we should not provide for ourselves a national institution where our own countrymen and countrywomen can be similarly taught.

MANAGERIAL BANTER.

THE theatrical manager, according to the popular conception formed of him and of his duties, has little leisure for the elaboration of practical jokes even in view of their serious illustration upon his stage. Engaged as he is in the pleasant critical labour of judging between the merits and probable attractive

powers of dramatic masterpieces, both ancient and modern, or in the scarcely less agreeable toil of selecting the shapeliest from amongst the crowd of aspiring damsels anxious to fascinate playgoers by their charms; filling up spare moments in writing orders for his friends, in entertaining critics, or in business visits to the entertainments set forth by his rivals; without a minute to throw away upon importunate young playwrights or upon ambitious old actresses; always to be seen moving about town at the full speed either of Hansom or brougham; and, in fact, compelled by his profession to undertake an immense amount of the delightful labour which physics pain, he is certainly not supposed to have time for the construction of those bright *jeux d'esprit* which editors demand for the padding of instructive magazines. When this most agreeably-employed of mortal men has written half a dozen notes to his aristocratic friends and patrons; has written supper-invitations to some popular actors and some charming actresses; has written a few emendations of his next new comedy, and has written a great many cheques, it is fairly concluded that he has written as much as he conveniently can; nor are efforts in any other kind of authorship looked for from his pen.

The fortunate manager, however, of one of our most popular theatres—the Gaiety—who delights in surprising the public, has now astonished his friends and acquaintances, as well as those who know him by name only, by showing that his multifarious occupations leave him both time and energy for the concoction of a satirical skit upon his own profession, or, as he would prefer to call it, his business. He has observed a tendency to sneer at those who would try to elevate theatrical-managership into art, and to scoff at the high-falutin “gush” of those who earnestly encourage managers in their efforts to raise the tone of the acted drama of the day. He knows that enthusiastic dramatic critics have laid themselves open to ridicule by their rhapsodies over the self-denial, the generosity, the unerring taste, the faithfulness, and the æsthetic beauty of high-class theatrical management; and his shrewd common sense tells him that a good cause is in danger of suffering from the injudiciousness of its advocates. So, like the skilful tactician that he is, he meets ridicule by chaff, and parodies the views of those who estimate most cheaply the services rendered to art by him and by his friendly rivals. Do they harp upon the commercial aspect of the question, and insist that, after all, the first object of a manager is to make money? He will go further still and argue that all the manager has to do is to open his shop with likely wares, to serve the public with what it wants, and to abjure all theories, prejudices, and tastes. Are they anxious to point out

that luck has much to do with theatrical success, as indeed it has with most other forms of success in this world? He caps the unpleasant hint of human fallibility by averring that he lives from hand to mouth, always waiting for something to turn up, and that his whole game is one of flukes from first to last. Is it suggested that high culture is not always possessed nor often needed by those who control theatres? This humorist comes forward with a twinkle in his eye to announce his conviction, founded upon experience, that "no particular training in literature and art is necessary for the good government of a theatre, but precisely those qualities that make a successful cheesemonger." The sarcasm is excellent throughout, and worthily recalls Mr. Hollingshead's literary achievements of days gone by. "You wish," he practically says to the Philistines and the toothpick critics, "you wish to drag the managers off their art pedestals and to lower their opinion of themselves? Well then enjoy the spectacle of one of them groveling at your feet; see what you would like to make of him and others like him, and then judge whether you are likely to profit by the change."

The retort is a fair one; but one cannot help fearing that the very symmetry and consistency of Mr. Hollingshead's satire may cause it to be misunderstood. Interspersed with the manager's humorous hyperboles of self-abasement are many hints given in all good faith to those who care to follow his steps towards theatrical success. He urges in the most sensible manner that those who desire to attract audiences to their houses must above all things be practical men. He summarizes the advice so often given in these pages with regard to making people comfortable at the play, to affording them facility for seeing and hearing properly, to providing them with decent refreshment at a fair price, and to giving, for the sake of vague and ignorant theatre-goers, some distinct character to his entertainments. Of course to all this he cannot resist adding a cynical reference to the paramount duty of remembering the tastes of "gentlemen, old and young, who will go to a theatre to admire the beauty of female actresses," and also of "ladies, old and young, who will go to the theatre to admire the beauty of male actors." But on the whole, this portion of the essay is apparently written in such good faith, and is so evidently reasonable, that it is very likely to mislead people as to the precise bearing of the rest. The burlesque is, as it were, too good; and those who are not in the joke may be inclined to take the joker at his word. A moment's consideration should, however, convince us that a judicious manager's explanation of the tricks of what he is pleased to consider his trade is scarcely likely to be quite com-

plete, since it cannot be his interest to let possible rivals into the secrets of his success. The electric light, by which he illumines his road to glory, may be very bright and very tempting, but it will certainly be to his advantage if it prove something of a will o' the wisp to any others who pursue it.

For the sake, then, of any ingenuous would-be manager, whether of the "belted earl" or "impecunious speculator" class, who may be tempted to take Mr. Hollingshead's banter *au pied de la lettre*, it may be only kindness to point out that, purposely no doubt, this scheme for "dealing in theatricals" on the cheesemonger basis sets all experience and ascertained fact at defiance. Leaving the satirist's own theatre with its highly-cultured and highly-ambitious season of French plays out of the question—since it would be scarcely fair to shoot him with his own feather—we may point out that the most successful theatres of the day are all managed by those who have had training in either art or literature, or in both. Mr. Hollingshead's petty shopkeeper would no more have been able to build up for the Prince of Wales's or for the Court their high artistic reputations than would the conventional lessee of Drury Lane have been able to catch the spirit of a Shakspearean revival at the Lyceum. As a matter of fact, the cheesemonger-managers are yearly being elbowed out of the way by those who have experience and taste and cultivation to give character to their enterprises. Then, again, it is obvious that although, as we have said, the element of luck is present here as elsewhere, no succession of what Mr. Hollingshead calls "flukes" will ever come to the aid of any one who does not, so to speak, deserve his good fortune. He must know how to make use of his chances, or they will avail him but little.

But to attempt a serious refutation of a plea urged with mock gravity is to suggest that we, too, fail to appreciate the point of the joke. It must suffice to point out to all whom it may concern that the manager of the Gaiety is, so far as we know him, a great deal too clever to waste his valuable time over a *bonâ fide* "Guide to Theatrical Knowledge" or a trustworthy "Handbook for the Hollingsheads of the Future," and that it is quite characteristic of his cynical humour to answer with puzzling half-truths and exaggerated generalizations the irritating good advice and impracticable recommendations which sometimes cause momentary annoyance even to the most philosophic of managers. Any who are injured by taking Mr. Hollingshead's admirable banter in earnest will have only their own obtuseness to thank for the punishment that is sure to follow confidence so misplaced.



THE THEATRE, NO. 11, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Hedde Bernhardt
in
"Ruy Blas"

Portraits.

XXI., XXII.—MDLLE. BERNHARDT.

ABOUT fifteen years ago the jury of the Conservatoire, headed by Auber, assembled with due gravity to conduct the entrance examination of a young person desirous of obtaining a place in that school. Escorted by her mother, a Jewess, the candidate, a slim and intelligent-looking girl, came in. It was customary on such occasions for would-be pupils to recite a tirade from Corneille or Racine, but the present candidate, unaware of this, was unprepared with anything of the kind. Fortunately, however, she knew Lafontaine's *Deux Pigeons*, and this she proceeded to recite. Scarcely had the lines—

Deux pigeons s'aimaient d'amour tendre,
L'un d'eux, s'ennuyant de logis,

passed her lips when Auber interposed. "Come here, mon enfant," he said, "I want to speak to you." The girl, with a degree of self-possession which brought a smile to the faces of the jurors, approached the chair. "Your name?" "Sarah Bernhardt." "A Jewess?" "By birth, oui, monsieur; but I have been trained as a Christian." "You recite very prettily," said the composer, "and will be admitted."

Before tracing Mdle. Bernhardt's career beyond this point it is necessary to inquire into her previous history. Born of parents in a good position, she was educated at the college of Grandchamp, "one of the most aristocratic establishments of the kind in France." Here, thanks to swift intelligence and intense application, she quickly distanced competitors of even more than her own age, and on leaving the convent found herself loaded with honours. But her thoughts had not been exclusively engrossed by her studies. She had looked as far into the world beyond the convent walls as she could, and, probably in obedience to the instincts of an inborn talent, had decided what her course in life should be. "I intend," she once said to the principal of the convent, "to be a nun—if I cannot be an actress at the Comédie Française." Her friends, who resided in the Rue St. Honoré, the birthplace of Molière, accepted their destiny with meritorious resignation. They made arrangements for her going to the Conservatoire, with what result we have already seen.

Fortified at this institution by lessons in declamation from Provost and Samson, Mdle. Bernhardt appeared at the Comédie

Française—passed at one bound from school to the first theatre in Europe. Her *Iphigénie* showed her to be an actress of rare promise, and the journals distinguished by knowledge of the theatrical art praised the performance with significant warmth. This was deemed a sufficient reason for obstructing her progress, and at length, too ambitious and spirited to submit to unfair treatment, she left the theatre. Soon afterwards we find her at the Gymnase, and soon after that at the Odéon. In order to acquire experience of the stage she would play even a fairy in *pièces à machine*. Before long her fame was such that the Comédie Française threw open its doors to her, and to the Comédie Française she returned. Now, owing to an assiduous cultivation of her natural gifts, she stands at the head of the French theatre—has established a right to be ranked on the same level as Desœilleux, Champmeslé, Adrienne Lecouvreur, Dumesnil, Clairon, and Rachel. Indeed, it seems impossible that any actress could possess a more vivid and brilliant imagination, more exquisite sensibility, a keener perception of character, or a more powerful mastery of the resources of her art. That her physical powers are unequal to one or two parts in which she has appeared is obvious enough, but even when she is at such a disadvantage the glowing energy of her spirit carries a spectator out of himself. The effect of her *éclairs* of passion is simply electrical.

Not content with the laurels she has gathered on the stage, Mdlle. Bernhardt has pursued other walks of art with remarkable success. In 1869 M. Mathieu-Meusnier induced her to sit to him for a bust. She attentively watched the process, and criticized the result with so much taste that the sculptor recommended her to make an essay in his art. That very night, on her return from the theatre, she adopted his suggestion; a relative, Madame Bruck, being awakened from a sweet sleep to pose as a model. In the result the young actress became an enthusiastic votary of sculpture, and her first serious work in this direction, a marble bust of a girl, was exhibited in the Salon of 1873. Next came a bust of a younger sister, who did not live to witness its completion. But it was not until Mdlle. Bernhardt exhibited *Après la Tempête* that her cleverness as a sculptor was fully evinced. The subject is maternal grief: an aged woman, bereft of reason by accumulated misfortunes, gazes at the dead body of an only son, refusing to believe that he is not alive, yet with a glimmering consciousness of the truth expressed in her withered face. The group is pathetic in a very high degree. Mdlle. Bernhardt has also executed, among many other things, a bust of Emile de Girardin and a colossal statue for the façade of the theatre at Monaco. Nor is she a



THE THEATRE, NO. 11, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Reminiscence

John Bernhardt

stranger to the palette: a striking picture of Medea slaying the children has come from her easel; and a few months ago, in order to kill time, she dashed off an excellent portrait in oil of a young lady staying in her house. Her energy seems inexhaustible; last December she wrote an account of an ascent she made last summer in a balloon, and now, in addition to being an actress and sculptor and painter, she has become the regular art-critic of a daily paper.

Mdlle. Bernhardt lives in the Avenue de Villiers, in a house built from her own designs. Having been kept for a few moments in a small ante-chamber, over the fireplace in which there is a full length portrait of the actress by Mdlle. Abbema, you cross a hall ornamented with mirrors and illustrations of Chinese life, and then find yourself in what may be described as either a drawing-room or studio. The window is abnormally large; a skylight has been let into the roof. The walls and ceilings are hung with beautiful tapestry, and light chairs and couches are mingled with unfinished pictures on easels, huge vases, busts, in want of a few final touches, and an endless variety of knick-nacks. Over the fireplace, which is singularly massive, hangs the portrait of Mdlle. Bernhardt by M. Clairin. It represents her sitting on a couch, in a cloud, as it were, of drapery. How symmetrical the face, how bright the eyes, how graceful the sum of all! But as we are absorbed in the contemplation of this striking picture the original bounces in, greeting you—unless you are a stranger to her—with unmistakable heartiness. She is dressed as in the accompanying photograph, but wears her trousers and pea-jacket without any loss of womanly grace. It is with extraordinary animation that she plunges into conversation. “Really,” she says, “I am so industrious that I can hardly find time even for a morning ride. I suppose this is the reason why I continue so thin. By the way, I have put an end to jokes on that point by saying in my balloon book that when I got into the car it seemed as though they had thrown out ballast. No; I do not sleep in a coffin; I did so once to familiarize myself with the idea of death, but now find it is not so comfortable as a bed. It is curious how many idle stories there are about me. My favourite dishes, I hear, are burnt cats, lizards’ tails, and peacocks’ brains sautées au beurre de singe. Nor is it true that I like to play at croquet with skulls, although I have here the skeleton of a man who destroyed himself on account of a disappointment in love. You ask me what my theory of life is; it is represented by the word ‘will,’ just as my theory of art is represented by the word ‘Nature.’ ‘Quand même,’ you know, is my device. It is now five o’clock; stay to dinner, and we will go down to the Français together.”

The Round Table.

THE ORIGIN OF THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

THERE is reason to believe that during the dark ages which immediately succeeded the fall of the Roman Empire the tradition of ancient comedy was never wholly lost. Terence's plays were not unknown in the convent, and the excesses of the players in the amphitheatre of the Eternal City seemed to find many imitators in the principal cities of Europe. For instance, in the year 789 Charlemagne found it necessary to suppress a company of farceurs and dancers which, under the style and title of the *Histrions*, gave entertainments of a doubtful description in the streets of Paris. The frivolous populace, however, *would* be amused, and were too rude to appreciate entertainments of a higher stamp than those to which the *Histrions* had accustomed them. In the twelfth century a *Fête des Foux* found considerable favour in their eyes. Masked men invaded the churches on festival days under the pretence of celebrating the "lives of the Saints," and, to the intense gratification of the crowds therein assembled, danced and sang and disported themselves in a very grotesque manner. On leaving the sacred edifice they repeated their buffoonery in chariots or on scaffolds erected for the purpose. The priesthood could not long shut their eyes to such an abuse, and in 1198 the doors of the churches were closed by the Bishop of Paris to all save those who presented themselves with strictly pious intent. Many years afterwards an attempt was made to revive the *fête*, but without success.

In the remarkable literary revival of the eleventh century a means of meeting the popular demand for diversion was found. The *Trouvères* composed their *chansons de geste* and *fabliaux*, the former being heroic poems and the latter humorous narratives of incidents of every-day life. In the principal "*jeux*" of Adam de la Halle, *Robin et Marion* and *Le Jeu de la Feuille*, a distinctly dramatic element may be perceived. Far away to the south, in the sunny land of Provence, the dawn of chivalry gave birth to the *Troubadours*, whose martial and amatory verse occasionally took a

somewhat dramatic form. Many of the Trouvères and the Troubadours recited or sung as well as composed, but as a rule that office was delegated to professional minstrels (*jongleurs*). The new literature proved very attractive, and as a consequence the *jongleur* soon became a familiar figure through the length and breadth of the country. Dressed in clothes of various colours, with a purse hung significantly from his belt, he wandered from town to town, from castle to castle. Eager listeners gathered about him as he took his stand in the market-place; in the gloomy feudal fortresses, even at tournament time, his coming was hailed with delight. He set out on his travels in the spring, to return laden with money and other gifts in the autumn. If, as not unfrequently happened, he had the hardihood to compose for himself, he was angrily denounced by the regular authors as a *batard*. But in course of time he found the ground slipping from under his feet. The compositions of the Trouvères and the Troubadours lost the charm of novelty. In this emergency he passed himself off as a Troubadour, and, if this did not serve his purpose, would don a fantastic dress, station himself at a cross-road, and descend to the lowest buffoonery for the amusement of the crowd. Once he was expelled from the kingdom, but on promising to mend his ways was permitted to return. His conduct, however, does not seem to have been at all times above reproach; he was subjected to a rigid control by the authorities, and in 1395 it was decreed that if he did or said anything of a scandalous nature he should be imprisoned and kept to bread and water for two months.

Meanwhile a decisive step in the way of dramatic revival had been taken by the introduction of religious plays. The germ of these exhibitions may be found in the services of the Church—in the splendour of the processions which wound through aisle to altar, in the animated dialogues of the priests, and the actual representation of such details as the Manger at Christmas and the Holy Sepulchre. The clergy saw clearly enough that in the then condition of the people it was necessary to appeal to the eye. Before long, as a further development of that policy, the Mystery and the Miracle were invented or imported. These plays, in which the most sacred personages appeared, were represented both in churches and in the streets, the characters being impersonated by priests. That the performances enjoyed great popularity need hardly be said. The age was one of ardent and unquestioning faith, and the objects of the gravest and most constant meditations of all classes of men were illustrated by the religious drama. Many of the details seem calculated to excite disgust or merriment, but the reverential spirit awakened by the theme of the play was not

qualified by any inconvenient sense of the incongruous. By degrees the religious drama emancipated itself from the control of the Church and became an independent institution. Guilds and companies were formed among the laity to perform these pieces, and in 1402 Charles VI. issued *Lettres Patentes* authorising a number of pilgrims not long previously returned from the Holy Land to perform a *Mystère de la Passion de N. S. J. C.* in the building where they had founded the service of their fraternity, the *Hôpital de la Trinité*, a little beyond the *Porte Saint-Denis*.

This was the first theatre in Paris. The *Confrères de la Passion*, as the pilgrims called themselves, did not throw away the advantage they had gained. They promptly erected a stage in the hall of the *Hôpital*, which, by the way, had been founded by two foster-brothers for the purpose of sheltering travellers who arrived too late to gain admission to the city. The stage was a scaffold divided into three parts, the highest representing *Paradise*, the next some part of the *Holy Land*, and the lowest the *infernal regions*. In the first and third the representations of the *Deity* and *Lucifer* might be seen. Angels descended or devils ascended to the second stage, as their interference in sublunary affairs was demanded. The *mise-en-scène* was very effective—more effective, it appears, than that of the *English Mysteries*. The performances were at first well attended, but in course of time the religious play was found rather wearisome, especially when it took several days to represent. The *Confrères*, perceiving the necessity of imparting a little variety to their entertainments, then called to their aid a band of well-born youths who, under the appellation of “*Enfants sans Souci*,” played farces on scaffolds in the streets for their pleasure. Their leader, the *Prince des Sots*—a title recognised by the king in *Lettres Patentes*—used once a year to make with the utmost gravity a public and formal entry into Paris, followed by all his little court. On such occasions he wore a capuchon with an ass’s ear on each side. The amateurs, at the instance of the *Confrères*, now agreed to play farces after the *Mysteries*, and a curious alternation of the sublime and the ridiculous was the result. The public, however, thoroughly approved of the change; indeed, the laughter provoked by the *Enfants* was so long and loud that the services and meditations of the monks in the *Hôpital* were very seriously interfered with, and all the players had to migrate to the *Maison Abbatiale de la Trinité*. The sotises of the *Enfants* were developments of the *fabliaux* of the *Trouvères*, and were indigenous to the soil. The *Clercs de la Basoche*, a guild established by Philip the Fair early in the previous century, here raised the standard of competition. They discharged

the duties of Clerks of the Revels, and now thought they might amuse the public themselves. Failing to obtain permission to play mysteries and sotises, they invented "Moralities," the figures in which, as in English pieces of the same type, are embodiments of sentiments and abstract ideas. The influence of the literature of the Trouvères, particularly the *Roman de la Rose*, is again shown in these works. The Basochiens eventually added farces to their repertoire, such as the famous *Maistre Pierre Patelin*. For many years the fraternity were silenced by the Parliament on account of the freedom and vigour of the satire imported into their performances; but on the accession of Louis XII., who regarded satire as a necessary corrective, they were restored to favour, permitted to say what they liked, and installed in the *salle* in which foreign princes were entertained by the kings of France. In return for these favours, one of the clerics—the immortal Pierre Gringoire—braved the wrath of the Inquisition by masquerading in the petticoats of Holy Church when the quarrel between the King and the Papacy arose. Eventually it was found necessary to suppress the whole body, together with the Enfants sans Souci. The Confrères soon shared the fate of their rivals and fellow-workers, having given much offence to all right-minded persons by introducing an element of broad farce into even plays based on the Passion. In 1548, after shifting their quarters more than once, they purchased a large portion of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, Rue Mauconseil. The Parliament, scandalised at the *mélange* of religion and burlesque exhibited in the performances, declined to renew the privileges except on the condition that religious plays were laid aside, and the religious drama in France accordingly came to an end.

In any case it could not have lasted much longer, as France was now beginning to bask in the light diffused by the Revival of Learning. The influence of that movement upon the French drama was speedy and decisive. The Pleiades, headed by Rousard, loudly proclaimed the supremacy of ancient literature; the youngest of the seven, Etienne Jodelle, wrote a tragedy on the Greek model under the title of *Cleopatra*. This tragedy was played in 1552 in the old courtyard of the Hôtel de Rheims, specially prepared for the purpose. Jodelle himself represented Cleopatra, supported by Remi Belleau and Jean de la Peruse, poets both. The play is generally in the five-foot Iambic couplet, but contains several alexandrines. In it may be noticed the *στιχομυθία* so happily ridiculed in the following century by Butler. *Cleopatra* proved immensely successful; the King and all his court were present at the second performance, and the Pleiades filled the air

with praises of their *confrère's* "happy courage." Jodelle next wrote *Eugénie*, a comedy, and *Didon*, another tragedy. The latter was probably brought out at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, as a number of actors established there had, prior to his writing it, prevailed upon him to cast in his lot with them. Many eminent poets devoted themselves to the composition of tragedies in the ancient form, and the exotic found a congenial element on French soil. This ready acclimatization was due in a large measure to a few plays written by Robert Garnier, which are remarkable for dramatic power and a command of majestic versification. In regard to comedy, the influence of the Italian school, strengthened by the appearance of a company of Venetian actors in 1577, was soon made manifest, particularly in pieces written by Jean de la Taille, Grévin, and Larivey. Towards the end of the century another foreign influence came to be felt. Though the Hôtel de Bourgogne claimed a monopoly in providing theatrical entertainments, a provincial company obtained permission to establish itself in Paris, and in the result the Théâtre du Marais arose. The strangers brought with them a very remarkable playwright, by name Alexandre Hardy, who from a long residence in Madrid was well acquainted with the works of Cervantes and Lope de Vega, and did not disdain to appropriate the fruits of their invention. Had he not been a plagiarist he might have been compared with the founder of the Spanish drama on one point—productiveness. He took only three or four days to get up a tragedy in five acts, and in the course of little more than twenty years is said to have produced seven hundred pieces. The few which have come down to us exhibit energy of expression and an instinct of melodramatic effect. He knew, he said, the secrets of dramatic art, but was nevertheless able, thank God, to think first of his trade. But while he held the stage the playgoers were led by degrees to appreciate higher excellence. The efforts of Malherbe to purify the French language, coinciding with the reaction towards refinement and culture which followed the civil and religious strife of the latter half of the sixteenth century, and in the midst of which the infancy of the new drama was passed, had an unmistakeable effect upon every description of literature. That effect was not entirely salutary; in one direction it gave rise to the elaborate affectation of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and in another to the equally elaborate affectation of such plays as the *Pyrame et Thisbé* of Théophile Viaud (a dramatist who narrowly escaped being burnt in the Place de Grève for writing the *Parnasse Satyrique*). *En revanche*, the reaction just spoken of may be said to have created Rotron and Mairêt, the latter of whom,

in his tragedy of *Sophonisbe*, derived from Trissino, gave us the first French play in which all the unities are piously preserved. The old farce in the meantime retained all its vitality, thanks to the acting of Tabarin, the buffoon of the Pont Neuf, and of three comedians—Gaultier-Garguille, Gros-Guillaume, and Turlupin—in the company at the Hotel de Bourgogne.

I now come to the most important period in the history of the French stage, the period during which the mould of tragedy and comedy was formed, dramatic writing placed at the head of all literature, the power of the stage developed, and the social status of the player raised. In 1636 a tragi-comedy called the *Cid* was represented at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The author, M. Pierre Corneille, an avocat of Rouen, had previously written six pieces of striking merit, but it was reserved for the seventh to convey anything like an adequate idea of his power. In *Le Cid*, the story of which was suggested by *Las Mocedades del Cid* of Guillen de Castro, love is most effectively brought into conflict with feelings of honour and filial duty, and the haughty and independent spirit of the great vassals of mediæval times seems mirrored in every scene. The play aroused intense enthusiasm; the doors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne were literally besieged, and “beau comme le Cid” quickly became a proverb. One man at least did not add his plaudits to those of the court and town. For some time Richelieu sought relief from the cares of state in devotion to matters about which he knew very little, literature and art. For example, he took pleasure in arranging the plot of a play, leaving the rest of the work to the poets whom he kept at his side. Corneille once belonged to this band, but soon found it necessary to withdraw. Having made a slight alteration, doubtless for the better, in his employer’s work, he was angrily rebuked for his presumption, was told that if he wished to remain in favour at the Palais Royal he must have more “esprit de suite.” This condition was one which Corneille could not fulfil, and in the result he retired to Rouen. And this man, who had been regarded at the Palais Royal as a literary hack, now wrote such a piece as the *Cid*! My lord cardinal waxed very wroth, not only by the discovery that in his estimate of Corneille his perception was so completely at fault, but also, as there is reason to suppose, because he could not claim a share of the honour. His bitterness manifested itself in a violent crusade against the play. He had it held up to ridicule by hireling scribes; induced the Academy to damn it with faint praise, and finally, in order to counteract the effect it had created, had a play represented at the Palais Royal with remarkable splendour and completeness. But this persecution,

which gave the drama an importance in literature it had not previously possessed, at any rate since the days of Euripides, did not answer his expectations.

Tout Paris pour Chimène a les yeux de Rodrigue,

as Boileau well said. Then, as though to complete the cardinal's discomfiture, Corneille went from triumph to triumph. *Horace*, *Cinna*, *Polyeucte*, and *Rodogune* appeared in rapid succession, and Paris rang with praises of their dramatic strength and the rugged grandeur of their versification. These plays went far to determine the character of French tragedy. Modern history and modern ideas, it was said, were of no use to the dramatist. The only quarry from which he could draw materials was ancient history and legend. The most important part of a play was the versification, which should always be in majestic and harmonious alexandrines, carefully rhymed. The unities of action and place and time should be scrupulously observed, and any departure from them be treated as an offence against art. These were the canons derived from Corneille in the course of his long career, the laws which for nearly two hundred years were to be the watchwords of the critical Sion of the French capital. Nevertheless, the plays of Corneille are in many respects weak. Except the *Cid*, perhaps the most beautiful of all, their interest is of a political rather than ethical nature. His command over the world of passion and character is not very great; his heroines are what Balzac calls "adorable furies," and their love, if they love at all, proceeds more from the head than the heart. His chief object is to move us to admiration; the idea of enlisting our tenderer sympathies but rarely occurs to him. Be his shortcomings what they may, however, he long stood in advance of his contemporaries. Rotron approached him in *Saint-Genest* and *Venceslas*, but the others—Mairet, Tristan, Duryer, Calprenede, Thomas Corneille—were, in spite of many special merits, left far behind. And the influence he exercised upon the drama was not limited to tragedy. Down to his time comedy can hardly be said to have existed in France. Plays termed comedies were sent to the Hôtel de Bourgogne by the facetious Abbé Boisrobert and others, but had as much right to the designation as the native or Italianized farce, the popularity of which had suffered no abatement. In Corneille's *Menteur* the long-felt desideratum was supplied. Founded upon Alarcon's *Verdad Sospechosa*, but bearing the impress of the author's genius in its plan and style, it was a character-comedy of the best description. The innovation, however, did not at first win popular favour. The farces or burlesques of Scarron, which came shortly afterwards,

were more to the taste of the audience. But the example set by Corneille was followed by Molière, who, after passing some years in the country as an actor and manager, settled in Paris in 1658. Already distinguished as a comic dramatist, he produced *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, in which the affectations of the Hôtel de Rambouillet are mercilessly ridiculed. The play had an immense effect, and it is said that an old man started up in the parterre and exclaimed, "Courage, Molière! voilà la vraie comédie!" For this kind of writing Molière was eminently well fitted. He had the eye of a lynx for foibles and vices, and could make use of them in a play with almost unrivalled humour and satirical power. In his *théâtre* the comedy of character and manners is seen almost at its best. At times he goes far below the surface of human nature, as in *Le Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe*. He had great advantages in his profession; his experience as a country manager familiarized him with bourgeois life, and the position he won at court served to enlarge his experience. That court, it will be found, deserves a moment's attention. In le Grand Monarque the France of the day was brilliantly personified; the humbled noblesse left their chateaux to gather about him, and genius was attracted to the foot of the throne to add to the grandeur of royalty. In luxury and taste his court eclipsed all others. Its tone, however, was essentially artificial. Enthusiasm or even earnestness was derided by the embroidered cavaliers and the face-patched ladies who congregated on the terrace at Versailles to talk in trope and figure. It was in this perfumed atmosphere that Racine, like many other poets, passed his early manhood. The precision and polish of his chief plays would alone suffice to show this. But the society in which he moved could not deaden his natural sensibility, and in the result he made a startling innovation in dramatic composition. Instead of seeking to surprise his audiences and overwhelm them with admiration, like Corneille, he sought to move and soften them. The source of effect on which he mainly relied was pity. He painted the passions and weaknesses of the human heart, taking care to palliate and even dignify them. The plots of his chief plays are devised with this end in view, and are worked out with exquisite sensibility and grace of expression. His men may be too "effeminate," but his heroines are characters of singular beauty. In 1677, after producing *Phèdre*, he severed his connection with the stage, partly because he was a Port Royalist, and partly because his enemies at court had formed a cabal to prevent the success of any new pieces from his pen. In his closing years, however, he wrote *Esther* and *Athalie*, which differ from the *Mysteries* as the Satan

of Milton differs from the hideous though somewhat diverting Devil of mediæval plays and legend.

The works of the great dramatists we have mentioned were not ill-represented on the stage. With the advent of Corneille the long list of great French players begins. The MS. of the *Cid* was brought to Paris by one Mondory, who soon afterwards appeared at the Théâtre du Marais. "This illustrious actor," says Tristan, "owed no triumph to accident. Merit such as his would have been rewarded in ancient times with crowns and statues. He was penetrated with a sense of the grandeur of the passions he represented, and his facial expression seemed to come from the movements of his heart." In or about 1638 he played Herod in Tristan's *Marianne* with such force as to bring on an attack of apoplexy, from which he died. His principal rival at the Hôtel de Bourgogne was Bellerose, described as admirable in both tragic and comic parts. This is probably true, as most of Corneille's heroes were confided to his care. He retired in 1643, to be succeeded by Floridor (Josias de Soulas). The latter, a gentleman by birth, had been placed in a regiment as ensign, but left it to go on the stage. He soon took the lead at the theatre, and had the privilege of representing the best characters in Racine's best plays. Excellent in all he did, he yielded the palm in comedy to Jodelet, for whom Scarron more particularly wrote. Montfleury, the libeller of Molière, began life as a page in the service of the Duc de Guise, and ended it through over-exerting himself as Oreste in Racine's *Andromaque*. The first representative of Hermione in that tragedy was Mdle. Desœillels, whose acting was characterised by tenderness, grace, and finesse. Other famous players of the Hôtel de Bourgogne were Beauchateau and his wife. Molière, who brought with him to Paris a most efficient company, including Madeleine Béjart and Mdle. de Brie, was himself, it appears, an actor of considerable ability. The prevailing tendency amongst the actors of the day was staginess; Molière spoke with ease and freedom. He played in nearly all his own pieces, and of his acting as Arnolphe (*L'École des Femmes*), Harpagon (*L'Avare*), Orgon (*Tartuffe*), and Argan (*Le Malade Imaginaire*) tradition speaks well. Having had considerable experience in the art of acting, he could hardly have failed to embody his own humorous creations with some effect. In the *Fourberies de Scapin* he did not allow his sense of personal dignity to prevent his being thrashed in the sack, whatever Despréaux might say against it. "The company," he said, "would suffer if I did not have a popular show." The same motive led him in his last illness to counterfeit the hypochondriacal fancies of Argan. Molière was not physically suited to other than comic

parts, his figure being thickset and not above the middle height. Towards the close of his career the Théâtre des Marais had the honour of introducing to public notice an actress who, though at first pronounced mediocre, soon achieved the highest distinction—Mdlle. Champmeslé. That distinction, if we may rely upon the judgment of Madame de Sevigné, was not undeserved; the new-comer “possessed both genius and power.” Her fame established, Mdlle. Champmeslé migrated to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and Racine fell in love with and wrote expressly for her. No more need be said of the players of that period, but it remains to be added that their social status was steadily rising. The patronage of the drama by Richelieu could not but add to the dignity of the player. Formerly held in contempt, his vocation was declared by Louis XIII. to be “worthy of respect,” and by the Grand Monarque to be not incompatible with the quality of a gentleman. The Church, however, was bitterly hostile to the stage, and the player who died without having renounced his profession could not be interred with the customary rites.

For many years a tendency had been shown at Court to bring the theatre under state control, and the moment when that aim could be conveniently attained was now approaching. In 1673, on the death of Molière, the company of his theatre, the Palais Royal, split into two bodies. One went to the Hôtel de Bourgogne; the other, headed by the dramatist’s wife, took a house fitted with a large private theatre in the Rue Mazarine. Soon afterwards, at the instance of the king, the Théâtre du Marais was finally closed, the company being sent to join “Mdlle.” Molière in her new quarters. The united troupes, which played alternately with a number of Italian actors, met with much success, notably in Thomas Corneille’s *Circe* and Devisé’s *Devineresse*. In the summer of 1680 the companies of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the theatre in the Rue Mazarine received orders to form themselves into one and take up their quarters at the latter house. They were to be on terms of partnership, and no other troupe would have the power to play in the ville and fauxbourgs of Paris without his Majesty’s express permission. The troupe, as composed by the king himself, consisted of twenty-seven players—Champmeslé, Baron, Poisson, Dauvilliers, Lagrange, Hubert, La Tuillerie, Rosimont, Hauteroche, Guérin, Du Croisy, Raisin, De Villiers, Verneuil, and Beauval; Madame Champmeslé, Madame Beauval, Mdlle. Molière, Mdlle. Belonde, Mdlle. de Brie, Mdlle. D’Ennebaut, Mdlle. Dupin, Mdlle. Guyot, Mdlle. Du Croisy, Mdlle. Raisin, Mdlle. Delagrance, and Mdlle. Baron. Eighteen of these had a part, six a half part, and the others a quarter part of what

was left in the treasury after other expenses had been paid. The players whose services were dispensed with received a pension. The first performance of the newly-formed company was given on the 25th of August, the house being full. Two years afterwards the king undertook to make the theatre a yearly allowance of 12,000 livres, and with that subvention the Comédie Française was established.

THE PALMY DAYS.

BY J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.

WE have heard so much, for very many years, of the “palmy days” of the British stage, of their superiority over the theatrical degeneracy of the present age, of their classical purity and overpowering excellence altogether, that a little examination into this much-vaunted supremacy may not be amiss. The epithet “palmy” is a little vague, it must be admitted. But we all know, that it is meant to denote some wonderful pitch of perfection, and after having had the obscure epithet dinned into our ears for more than half-a-century, we have accepted it as an expression before which we are bound to bow our heads in humility.

It will be necessary to keep to the period for which the designation “palmy days” has been more peculiarly used; for ever since the English stage has existed there never was a time when each generation has not been told by its fathers and grandfathers, that histrionic excellence had vilely degenerated, and that the actors of the past were infinitely superior to those of the present—whenever that present may have been. The *laudator temporis acti* has always existed, and doubtless will never die, as long as human nature is human nature still. Through the long list of eminent English actors, there has not been one who has not been declared greatly inferior to his immediate predecessor in fame. All in the past, nothing in the present, has been the eternal cry.

But to revert to the “palmy days” of the first quarter of the present century—the period when these extraordinary days are said to have conspicuously flourished. The present generation is told that then Shakspeare reigned supreme—that “the legitimate” (another obscure designation, the actual meaning of which has never been explained)* was triumphant—that trashy, sensational dramas

* A modern dramatist, on the mention of the “legitimate drama” in a comedy, offers the following irreverent explanation:—“I suppose they call it legitimate, like a legitimate son, because it’s not natural.”

were unknown—that “burlesque”—a production of degenerate, modern days—was ignored; and that classical purity was the characteristic of the British stage. It is as well to see how far these pretensions are admissible.

Shakspeare, it is true, received his due share of honour and respect. But there is no boldness in asserting that our great dramatic poet has been equally honoured, and even more respected, since the supposed regrettable loss of these same palmy days. The wonderful revivals of Macready, and Charles Kean, and Phelps at Sadler's Wells, where almost every one of the Shakspearean plays was given in its turn, are still fresh in the memory of a present generation of playgoers. Has not Drury Lane continually paid its tribute to the mighty name? Has not *Hamlet* been given for two hundred consecutive nights at the Lyceum—an evidence of respect and admiration for the bard never dreamt of in the “palmy” days? And—to pass over the revivals of *Macbeth* and *Othello* at the same theatre—has not *Hamlet* been again running on, filling crowded houses, night by night? Is not Shakspeare perpetually cropping up at minor and outstanding theatres? Surely, scarcely a week passes when some Shakspearean play does not make its appearance on the bills. At all events, then, we cannot concede to these “palmy days” any superiority in reverence for Shakspeare.

It may be admitted that, in those days, Shakspeare was supplemented by heavy tragedies in blank verse, the stilted language of which would nowadays bring up a smile, instead of drawing down a tear, and varied by five-act comedies, but very few of which have come down, except in the memory of some old playgoers, to the present day—comedies, teeming with fine bombastic sentiment, relieved by occasional liveliness of a more or less coarse description. But how about those much-abused characteristics of the present stage, with which the “palmy days” are said to be untainted?

The so-called “sensational” drama! Are we to believe that this species of dramatic entertainment was unknown, or, at all events, not recognised in those days of classical purity? On turning over any old bills of the period we shall find evidence in plenty that the “sensational” (as it is now called) abounded. What is this? *The Castle Spectre*, by the famous Lewis, called “Monk” Lewis, on account of his extravagant, somewhat blasphemous, and prurient novel of that name. Here we have “sensational” appearances of the ghost of a murdered lady—hairbreadth escapes—hazardous leaps from windows—secret passages, and clanking chains in abundance. Nor must it be supposed that this precious production (ridiculed for its ultra-sensationalism in the present day) was treated in the “palmy” period with any contempt, either by manager or public.

The great names of John Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, and Charles Kemble, together with other leading actors of the time, all appear in its cast, and the play would seem to be a favourite one with the audiences of the day; for it is constantly turning up in the bills, and it may be said to have had a "tremendous run," or what, at least, was so considered, as the stage was then constituted.

Let us turn over the bills again, and we shall find that the author of *The Castle Spectre* was one of the great favourites of the day. His "sensational" dramas follow quickly on one another. Here we have *Adelmar, the Outlaw*, and again, *Adrian and Orrila*, and now, *The Ethiop of the Desert*—all of them plays of a character which would now be designated as "frantic melodrama." But they were played by leading actors in the great theatres, and supported by the admiring public. Mr. Dimond follows in the wake with his five-act melodrama, *The Foundling of the Forest*, and other pieces of the same description, and is reputed a great author. And this is the classical purity of the "palmy days."

Melodrama *pure et simple* thrives, too, as is instanced by *The Tale of Mystery*, *Tekeli*, *The Blind Boy*, and other adaptations from the French of the fertile melodrama writer, Pixérécourt. The Christmas pantomimes have likewise their "tremendous runs." But little account need be taken of this fact in gauging the pretensions of the "palmy days," as, from some unexplained warp in public judgment, pantomimes have been always admitted as belonging to the mysterious "legitimate." It is at Easter that both the great theatres—Covent Garden and Drury Lane—the caskets in which we are given now to understand that the "legitimate" was exclusively enshrined, strain all their energies to produce, in rivalry, their great spectacular pieces, in which the principal ingredients are scenery, dresses, fairy effects, broadsword combats, real horses, glitter, show, and pretty *coryphées* with unexceptionable legs. Among these we find *Cherry and Fairstar*, *Zoroaster, or the Spirit of the Star*, *Peter Wilkins*, with its bevy of flying women in the scantiest attire, and, somewhat later, *The Cataract of the Ganges*, with real horses and real water. I had nearly forgotten *Timour the Tartar* and *Lodoiska*, both again embellished with "real horses," the latter being a melodramatic rendering of a French opera given without the music. Of a similar description is *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*, a melodrama derived from Gretry's opera of the same name, with the suppression of the greater portion of the music, in which the great actor of his day, Mr. John Kemble, sang, or was supposed to sing, a duet with Blondel from his prison window, and entered triumphantly, at the end, on a white horse. Was all this classical? Was all this legitimate? Did all this redound to the credit of these much-

vaunted "palmy days," in which we are told that "sensations," and vain show, and inane glitter were utterly unknown?

Come we to burlesque! It is perfectly true that the fanciful fairy extravaganzas by Planché—those *bouquets* of wit, and poetry, and captivating song—had not yet seen the light and paved the way for the broader burlesque, with its coarse fun, jingle of sounds, music-hall songs, and "nigger breakdowns." But are we to be taught now to believe in the superior classical purity of *Bombastes Furioso*, *Chrononhotonthologus*, or the earlier *Tom Thumb*? Deprived of their original satirical intention, these burlesques appear at the present day preposterous and inane productions; and yet they continued to be played in the "palmy days" on their own merits, long after the original meaning was lost, and the salt, with which they were garnished, had lost all savour. On their first production the satire of bombastic tragedies of the time, long speeches of which were ably parodied, and recognised as parodies by the audiences of the day, had a certain excellence of their own. But long after all remembrance of the plays, which they were intended to ridicule, had passed entirely from the minds of men, and their satire had no taste or flavour more, they still continued to be played—and acted, too, by all the best leading comic actors of the time—for the delectation of audiences easily tickled by their senseless and grotesque extravagance. The "palmy days" never revelled in burlesque, forsooth!

It would be considered sheer profanity, of course, in the opinions of those who see no excellence except in the past, to venture to cavil at the presumed vast superiority of the "Kemble School." So let any allusion to it pass; although there may be presumptuous individuals who have the insolence to consider that the general school of acting on the British stage has immeasurably improved—that many of our modern actors (although not concentrated in two or three theatres, but dispersed among so many numerous places of dramatic entertainment) can hold their own against their much-vaunted predecessors—that "stage business" has reached a point of perfection of which the "palmy days" had no conception—and that a completeness exists in general *ensemble*, in which those great days would not attempt to rival the despised present.

One word more. Is the extraordinary epithet of "palmy" supposed, among other meanings, to apply to the exceptional good fortune which attended the theatrical enterprises of those days? Scarcely. We read accounts of failures, of sudden collapses of managers, even of bankruptcy. We all know that there are at the present day several theatres, conducted with talent, intelligence, and taste, in which considerable fortunes have been, and are still being,

made. So, even in this interpretation of the epithet, it would be only the most obstinate *laudator temporis acti* who could admit the superiority of the much-vaunted "palmy days."

"STAGE-ENGLISH."

BY HERMAN C. MERIVALE.

SIR, henceforth we meet no more as friends, but as foes. I never shall forget the effect these tremendous words, spoken in real life, had upon my young mind.

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.

We were both in love with her, and she was in love with neither of us. We were fellow-pupils, fresh from Oxbridge University, "reading" in Wales—in other words fishing, boating, climbing mountains, and flirting to our heart's content with her and other young ladies who lived close by. There was a third pupil, a dark horse, who was younger and more permanent, and who when we had returned to Oxbridge, full of memories and constancy, took a base advantage, and married her. "You will have noticed," says that great, but under-estimated philosopher, Mr. Maddison Morton, "that they generally do become another's." The particular occasion for the words quoted was this. The pupils had proposed, for a day's relaxation from intellectual work, to climb Cader-Idris. When they came to the point I backed out and pretended I had a headache. If I were writing this for the stage I should have to say that "I feigned indisposition." When the others were well out of the way, expressing condolence, I slipped off to my intended (as she surely was, though unhappily she did not intend me), and spent the day with her, getting an invitation to dinner out of her father by playing on his sympathy for my solitude in the absence of the other pupils. When I got home, full "*veteris Bacchi pinguisque farinæ*," and fuller still of Love's young dream, the climbers had returned, and my rival had discovered my simple plot. At first we had been great allies; latterly, since our little game had become mutually transparent, on a sort of armed neutrality footing. That night he met me at the head of the staircase as I was chuckling off to bed, with a face pale with fury, and addressed me in those terrible words. He was a very little man, and since that reading-party I don't think we have ever met. I laughed excessively at the time, and can never help laughing when I recall the scene now, though, alas! more than an act of my short life-drama has been played out since then. But what struck me most of all was the unnatural stiltiness of the man,

though he was very much in earnest in our youthful way. It was because he chose to speak, with the last three-act melodrama in his head, I suppose, in what I have ventured to call stage-English, which nobody can speak naturally. Had he said, "What a brute you are," I should have been sorry instead of being amused. Stage-English is not confined to the stage, for it flourishes under the shadow of Mudie, and is growing a perfect pest in the newspapers. If I were an editor, I should read Thackeray and Tom Robertson till I was thoroughly saturated with honest vernacular, and should present the sack or the bowstring to the very first man on my staff who should venture to translate, "He was past seventy," into "He had exceeded the allotted term of human life." Yet they all do it, always. I don't believe they could say a man was past seventy, if they tried.

But most men read quick when they read at all, or rather they "skim," nowadays; and many writers of a supposed higher school take advantage of the fact to build up sonorous sentences which mean absolutely nothing, in "stage-English" of a lofty order, which readers pass quickly over, and think they understand, because they have not taken the trouble to analyse them. Here is one, taken at random from the *Fortnightly Review* for February, from an article by a Mr. Frederic W. H. Myers on "Virgil," and representing his views on poetry in general (I know nothing of Mr. Myers personally, and never saw anything of his before, but merely use him for my text):—"It is true that the limits of melody within which poetry works are very narrow. Between an exquisite and a worthless line there is no difference of sound in any way noticeable to an unintelligent ear. For the mere volume of sound—the actual sonority of the passage—is a quite subordinate element in the effect, *which is produced mainly by relations and sequences of vowels and consonants*, too varying and delicate to be reproducible by rule, although far more widely similar, among European languages at least, than is commonly perceived." All which means, if it means anything at all, that a "boat" rhymes to a "coat," but not to a "cold," and I am not sure that the writer meant as much as that. As for his statement about the limits of melody being narrow, that must depend upon the poet. And Mr. Frederic W. H. Myers writes poems, as I understand. Swinbourne might differ. I have emphasized the passage which is, I suppose, the pith of the thing. Further on in the article I find some beautiful things about people with "infertile instincts," whose "scanty utterance has rather mocked than assuaged for them the incommunicable passion of the soul," who have done something or another with earth's less ennobling emotions which I totally fail to under-

stand, and might have been transmuted into spiritual strength, "as the noise of bear, and wolf, and angered lion came to the Trojans with a majesty which had no touch of fear or pain, as they heard them across the midnight waters," &c. Why was the lion more angry than the bear and the wolf? and why the deuce should the Trojans be afraid of any of them on the other side of the midnight water? or they of the Trojans, if the fear refers to the animals, which is not clear? On the same side of the water it might be another thing. The men who write like this are the men who have nothing to say. Then why write at all? "C'est si facile de ne pas écrire." Yet last month and this I find this same Mr. Frederic W. H. Myers allowed to write in the *Nineteenth Century* about Victor Hugo, one of the few giants of the drama, and on the whole not thinking much of him, as how should he? He does after his kind, though I would commend to his notice a remark I read of the late Lord Lytton's, that "in dealing with the great names in literature the only attitude for criticism is intelligent admiration." That is a noble sentence, to be laid to heart. Oh, my brothers, by all means let us cut each other up and make each other as uncomfortable as we can, but let us leave the demi-gods alone: there are none too many of them. Victor Hugo's new critic calls him an "egoist." "Egotist" used to be a good enough word. What should the great man be, in the name of reverence and common-sense, to whom such an "ego" has been given? The "egoism" recoils with a vengeance on critics of this kind. I must plead ignorance if in laughing at Mr. Frederic W. H. Myers I am myself sinning against Lord Lytton's canon, and depreciating a great name in literature. At all events it is a long one.

However, Mr. Myers's criticisms do not matter, but his English does—to all who care for the old language; and the editors of such capital periodicals as the *Fortnightly* and the *Nineteenth*, who do every day real service to literature and are among the trustees of the tongue, should cast out utterly such nonsense as this. The relief of turning to one of Matthew Arnold's crystal articles is beyond description; for in truth this sort of stage-English in high places lives only for and by the increasing class of people, who want to prove their own cleverness by professing to understand writing that every honest reader must frankly confess has nothing in it to be understood—the class wonderfully summed up the other day by Mr. Gladstone in this very *Nineteenth Century* as that which "thinks itself cultivated because it has leisure."

I have left myself less space than I intended for stage-English proper. It is a dear old friend. "But no matter" and "I must dissemble" have been standing jokes from time immemorial, I

daresay since Thespis's day. It is a dangerous friend though, whose friendship most dramatists are apt to abuse, and the more dangerous because the poor actors suffer by it, and not the real sinners. I constantly hear them accused of "staginess," simply because the words put into their mouths are in stage-English, an artificial tongue into which their authors translate the phrases of common life, I suppose to elevate them. In real life, probably, the loftier the situation—in other words, the stronger the emotion—the simpler the vernacular in which that emotion struggles into words. Watch two strong men quarrelling, and mark the Saxon they use. In contrast to that take this passage from a well-known, and what is more a thoroughly sound and scholarly modern comedy. A shipwrecked crew hails relief approaching, and one of them announces it to the rest with, "Stay! I descry a vessel!" Now what man in extremity ever "descried a vessel"? And how could the hapless actor be anything but stogy? Try to speak the words, reader, and see how you will stumble over them. Why not the natural expression of the feeling, "Stop! I see a ship"? Many years ago, I was propounding this theory to a dramatist just completing his first play. He said he was sure he had made no such mistakes. I thought he was lucky if he had avoided them, and took up his manuscript. On the first page I looked at I found the heroine, who had listened behind a screen to a revelation of her lover's duplicity, coming forward with, "Stay! I have heard all!" But she hadn't; she had heard everything. Try the two phrases, and see the effect of the difference, small as it may seem. One is nature; the other isn't, and cannot be spoken naturally, any more than Mr. Myers's bombast can be read intelligently. It is of stogy writing that stogy acting is born. It does not raise the situation. It is not raised, but lowered, when "Never mind an angry word" is translated into "Pay no heed to a word spoken in wrath."

In a good French drama lately played in London, un-Frenched, alas, without being Englished, as is the case with most of them, I heard the other night a very effective scene, in which the injured wife turns on the husband with three or four strong sentences, "Was it I who did so-and-so, or you? Say!" "Was it I who took such a thing, or you? Say!" And so forth. But in real life nobody says "Say;" and what nobody says nobody can say. The simple change into "Tell me!" would multiply the strength of the situation, and the chance of the actress, a hundred-fold. I am afraid that dreadful French drama, which, except in such cases as the poor egoist Victor Hugo's, who writes for mankind, has nothing in common with ours, is greatly answerable for stage-English. The abomination of adaptation, spoken of by Daniel the

prophet, is the easiest work in the world to those who know French and English, and very hard to those who don't. The true receipt is to study the speeches closely, get them well into your head, and write them in English, as near the French as possible. Dialogue is written from the heart, not the dictionary. When "une fenêtre qui donne sur la rue" becomes "a window which gives on the street," as it did in a drama only the other day, we know that the translator must have sat down, looked out "donner" in due form, found that it means "to give," and transplanted it into a soil where it is a mere exotic, as connected with a window. Poor Tom Robertson! how well he understood the secret, when he put into the mouths of the "swells" he sketched so admirably such phrases as, "I am the singelst young person out,"—or, "This is a wild thing in sisters-in-law." Slang to the slang—love to the lover—purism to the purist—he could do it all: and for the few who do not regard the drama of the day as outside literature his is a name which lives among the tender humourists (not "humorists," please,) very high indeed.

Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft! you have done yeoman's work in your time; but is it quite true that you discovered him? Did he not—just a little—discover himself? Is it a fact that the capital comedy of *Society* ran vainly about seeking where it might be played, till it jumped, with you and him, into a sudden and all-round-deserved success? Is it not just possible that, by turning your little theatre into a temple of the French drama, you may be losing *Caste* in more senses than one? You are to produce the *Burgess of Arcy Bridge*, and much good may it do us all. Call it so frankly, for in dealing with a comedy of manners the closer the paraphrase (given good English) the better the play. To treat one otherwise is only a new sin against the old Horatian law—

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam,
and brings its own punishment. Ah, well! Like many graver things in this odd world, to which, please God, those of us who are content to trust in Him and do our best may hold the key some day, it is all rather sad, and rather stupid.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIETY UPON THE STAGE.

BY FRANK A. MARSHALL.

IN an article under the above heading in the March number of *The Theatre*, I endeavoured to show that to "denounce the stage of the past as a corruptor of morals" was to bring a false

accusation utterly unfounded on facts: and I now propose to show that it is equally false if brought against the stage of the present. In March, 1876, Cardinal Manning made a speech, in the course of which he said, "Theatres are centres of corruption"; afterwards, in defending this wholesale denunciation, he wrote, "The most corrupt part of Paris is the quarter of the theatres. The neighbourhoods of Covent Garden and Drury Lane and the Haymarket are well known in London. It is so in every Continental city; it is so also in every part of London where the lesser theatres, down to the penny theatres, exist."

The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster is known to all his co-religionists as one of the kindest-hearted and most charitable of men. He is known to Protestants as an enthusiast in the cause of total abstinence, and as an earnest and unwearying advocate of every scheme which has for its object the benefit of the poor. Many instances could be mentioned of his patient sympathy, and large-hearted charity, towards individuals who had little right to expect either at the hands of any man. I am sure that any Catholic, employed in theatres, would be treated by the Cardinal with the same gentle kindness that he shows towards every member of his flock who is brought into contact with him. Yet such is the prejudice against the stage, which is infused into the minds of some by their education—a prejudice strong in proportion to their ignorance of theatres and all matters connected with them—that we find an ecclesiastic of great intellectual attainments, and of the most unbounded charity, denouncing an entire profession with an injustice from which, could he but recognise it as such, he would be the first to shrink. Let us examine, then, the truth of this indictment against theatres. They are "the centres of corruption;" wherever a theatre is found there is found an immoral neighbourhood; therefore the immorality of the neighbourhood is owing, more or less, to the theatre.

This is a fair way of stating the proposition: let us look at the facts. Theatres are established, as a rule, in the most populous thoroughfares of great cities; these populous thoroughfares are more or less the scenes of immorality. Are theatres to be held responsible for this more than any other buildings in the vicinity? If they are, then we shall expect to find that the more theatres there are the more immoral will be the neighbourhood. Now what are the real facts of the case? Let us admit that the neighbourhoods of the Haymarket, of Drury Lane, and of Covent Garden were, and are, more or less remarkable for immorality. The Haymarket has long been a disgrace to any Christian city; but the wretched women who ply their trade in that neighbourhood come

from every quarter of the town ; and I question whether one in a hundred of them, or of their patrons, can be connected in any way, directly or indirectly, with the theatre. The visitors to the three theatres in that neighbourhood generally hurry away from the spot as soon as the entertainment is over ; and very few, if any, among the spectators or actors in the disgraceful scenes, which may be witnessed every night in that part of the town, are furnished by the audiences of the theatres. Were any honest attempt made by the Government to do away with the abominable scandal which infests this quarter, they would find no more earnest allies than the managers of theatres. The new theatre which has been built in this neighbourhood, the Criterion, with the buildings attached to it, occupies the site of one of the vilest so-called "Saloons" that ever existed in London ; and, bad as the condition of this part of Piccadilly is at certain hours of the night, I do not scruple to say that the presence of a theatre has exercised a beneficial influence, and but for that influence the state of things would be much worse than it is.

It is the interest of the proprietors and managers of theatres, to put it on the lowest grounds, that both inside and outside the building, decency and morality should be maintained. Nothing injures a theatre more, as a commercial enterprise, than the congregation of immoral characters round its doors or in its lobbies ; as by such an abuse the decent and respectable persons, upon whose support the undertaking depends for its success, are kept from coming there. However bad the neighbourhood in which a theatre may be situated, it will invariably be found to be the best conducted place of amusement in that quarter.

But now let us take the instance of a neighbourhood in which for a long time there was only one theatre, whereas now there are three almost next door to one another. Wych-street and Holywell-street contained, within my memory, the most filthy dens of vice to be found in London. The Olympic was then the only theatre in that neighbourhood, and the proprietors did their best to purge the neighbourhood ; the law was at last roused into action, but no real improvement took place till the sites were acquired for the erection of the Globe and Opera Comique Theatres ; since these two theatres have been in existence, the character of the houses around has been entirely changed, and though I do not claim for the theatres the whole credit of the improvement, I do say that they have materially aided it. But long before even the Olympic Theatre was built, when Drury Lane was the only theatre in the neighbourhood, the spires of two churches overshadowed this nest of vice ; what would be said of any one who argued from the then

surroundings of St. Clement's and St. Mary's in the Strand that churches were necessarily "centres of corruption"?

To take the case of Continental cities next; let Paris serve as an example. If I wanted to find the most immoral neighbourhood of Paris I think I should look for it in Belleville, and not in the Boulevards, where most of the theatres are and most of the hotels in which foreign visitors to Paris congregate. No doubt the Boulevards are frequented by a great many immoral persons; but I do not think the theatres are in any way responsible for this, any more than the beautiful church of the Madeleine is for the unedifying proceedings which go on under its very shadow.

The fact of the case is that, look at it how we may, theatres cannot but exercise a good moral influence on the people in general. The publicity of the entertainment, the number and varied nature of the audience to which they appeal, the strict rules of order and decorum which the self-interest of both manager and spectators imposes, all tend towards the prevention of any immorality, unless the state of society, from its highest to its lowest point, is entirely corrupt. Whenever any one section of society becomes degraded by vice, it will be sure to endeavour to force its own degradation on the places of amusement it frequents. So, occasionally we may see a theatre devoted to a more or less immoral class of entertainment, but we shall always find that the demand created the supply, not the supply the demand. The manager is too often the complaisant servant of corruption, but very rarely indeed is he the active corruptor. As aids to temperance and sobriety, theatres are of no small importance; neither the habitual drunkard nor the victim of excess cares much for the theatre, he generally votes it slow and rather dry work.

Nobody can be more alive than I am to the fact that many abuses exist on the stage in the present day; but I hold that for these abuses the stage, that is to say, the drama and those connected with it, are not primarily responsible. To do away with these abuses, which come from without and not from within, we must attack society, and not the stage. Authors, actors, actresses, and managers ought to combine together to maintain the honour and purity of the drama; the more thoroughly devoted they are to their art, the more dearly they prize their profession, the higher claims they put forward on its behalf, the better will they attain this end. If those connected with the stage will but resolutely refuse to assist in entertainments which must destroy their self-respect, they will find no one will dare to look down on them except those whose contempt is an honour. It will generally be found, I am glad to say, that those who have been born and bred in a theatre are the

most jealous of the reputation of the stage; it will very rarely be found that a theatre under the management of an actor or actress, or of a dramatic author, has anything objectionable in its entertainments; the most degrading exhibitions are nearly always to be seen in those places of entertainment on the management of which the most frivolous section of fashionable society has the greatest influence.

CONCERNING *THE CRIMSON CROSS*.

BY DUTTON COOK.

IN the last number of *The Theatre*, Mr. Saville Rowe, with some excitement of manner, has proclaimed his own virtues and protested against the vices of his reviewers. He is, as he alleges, "a reputable man," "candid, straightforward, honest": they are mere "schoolmasters," "high-handed and supercilious," "self-opinionated and arrogant," ignorant and unjust.

Now I sincerely sympathise with an author who believes himself wronged by criticism. I am an author myself, and more than once it has happened to me to be reviewed by certain journals in a manner I found eminently disagreeable. I think, therefore, that Mr. Rowe's expostulations and animadversions should be indulgently considered. Clearly his vanity has been mortified, and, as he believes, his fair fame has been assailed. Now and then, however, he has allowed his indignation to urge him beyond decent bounds. He conceals his own identity under a fictitious name, and should consequently have forborne to reproach his critics with writing anonymously. Between the pseudonymous and the anonymous there is little to choose. As a matter of fact he is well aware of the names of his critics; and knows, too, that they leave their reviews unsigned in accordance with the rules and customs of the British press, and not at all because they desire "to state under the shield of the anonymous what they would hesitate to write under their own names." Further, it seems to me idle in Mr. Rowe to charge his critics with ignorance of the drama of *Perrinet Leclerc*; and I am at a loss to understand his assertion that of that work "the general public know nothing, and the reviewers less, according to their own confession." If nothing, or less than nothing, was known of *Perrinet Leclerc*, the play of *The Crimson Cross* could not possibly have been accused of resembling too closely that earlier production. However, I have no authority to speak on behalf of other critics: I am only concerned on my own account. I desire, therefore, to explain, as briefly as I may, my share in the adverse criticism incurred by *The Crimson Cross*, its authors or arrangers.

My name appears at the head of this article, so that I am no longer impeachable as an anonymous critic; and for Mr. Rowe's further information I avow that I am the critic who charged him and his colleague, in relation to the public notice accompanying their play, with "suppressing truth and suggesting untruth." Mr. Rowe denounces that sentence as "roundabout and complicated." I hold on the contrary that in convenient and familiar terms it exactly described the state of the case. But in attempting to deal with the questions Mr. Rowe has raised I encounter a preliminary difficulty. I can come to no agreement with him concerning the classification of his play. He shrinks from dubbing it "new" and "original"; but contends that it would be "an injustice to management and the public alike to call it an old play, or a translated, or adapted play." My view of the matter had the advantage of directness and simplicity at any rate. To my thinking *The Crimson Cross* could only be classed among plays adapted from the French.

A critic must form and express his own opinion; the public will decide upon the worth or the worthlessness of his judgments. Certainly he does not write to register the views of managers and playwrights touching the entertainments they present upon the stage. Mr. Rowe cannot surely have expected that his play would be as fondly regarded by others as by himself or accepted generally at his appraisal of it. Holding *The Crimson Cross* to be an adaptation, was I not entitled, was I not bound, in reviewing it, to speak of it as it seemed to me? But Mr. Rowe imagines that I was insufficiently acquainted with the French original; that I took no pains to verify my description. Let me reply that I took very considerable pains. I have known the drama of *Perrinet Leclerc* for more than thirty years. Moreover I sat through a performance of *The Crimson Cross* from the first word to the last; the while I had with me a copy of the French play and was thus enabled to compare it act by act and scene by scene with the English version. I have had some experience, I may even say that I have gained a measure of reputation, as a dramatic critic. I am accustomed to estimate the value of adaptations in relation to their originals. To me, as I have said, it was plain beyond all dispute that *The Crimson Cross* was an adaptation of *Perrinet Leclerc*: just as *Peril* was an adaptation of *Nos Intimes*, *Diplomacy* of *Dora*, and *The Vicarage of Le Village*.

Mr. Rowe has kindly taken us behind the scenes a little. He tells us that he was asked, presumably by the Adelphi management, "to put a new complexion upon an old melodrama . . . to give a new version of old *Perrinet Leclerc*." It is admitted, then, that at the outset nothing more was contemplated than simple adaptation.

May I ask at what point in the course of Mr. Rowe's performance of this task did *The Crimson Cross* cease to be an adaptation without becoming, however, a new and original play,—for Mr. Rowe concedes that his work cannot fairly be so described? It is quite true that Mr. Rowe made certain alterations in the elder drama: otherwise *The Crimson Cross* would have been not an adaptation but a translation. He professes to have reconstructed *Perrinet Leclerc*; but this I cannot admit. The construction, as I judge, remains unaltered. The leading characters and incidents of the French play are substantially reproduced in the English version. With one omission, the scenes in *Perrinet Leclerc* are identical with the scenes in *The Crimson Cross*, and follow each other in the same order. "D'Armagnac in our play," writes Mr. Rowe, "is a mixture of several characters." He was converted into a lover of the queen; in other respects he did not differ from the D'Armagnac of the original, and he discharged all his prototype's duties in the story. "The last act of our play," Mr. Rowe continues, "is finished after the model of the *Bouquetière des Innocents*." The last act of *The Crimson Cross* is situation for situation, and often speech for speech, the last act of *Perrinet Leclerc*, with the exception that on the English stage the life of Perrinet is spared, and, fresh from carving a cross upon the naked breast of Count D'Armagnac, he becomes the husband of the soubrette of the evening. Mr. Rowe concludes: "An attempt was made to elevate the diction by writing all the dramatic dialogue in blank verse." Mr. Rowe is to be credited with this attempt; but the improvement of the play's literary qualities at the expense of its dramatic character rather impeded than promoted its chances of success.

Now having decided, according to my lights, and after the method I have explained, that *The Crimson Cross* was an adaptation, I had next to consider how far Messrs. Rowe and Manuel had acknowledged their obligations to the French original. The playbill had the air of conveying much information: the authors declared that they had "reconstituted an epoch," whatever that may mean, and referred with evident pride to the grand historical scenes they were bringing upon the stage. They quoted as their authorities "the writings of Monstrelet, Alexandre Dumas, and M.M. Anicet Bourgeois and Lockroy." But not one word did they say of their debt to the drama of *Perrinet Leclerc*; no hint was given that the subject had already done duty upon the stage! Was this their candour and ingenuousness? Even now Mr. Rowe has the courage to write: "We told the public every book we had consulted. . . . I appeal to every candid and unprejudiced mind whether any announcement of obligations has ever been so full or

complete as ours." What! a complete "announcement of obligations," and no mention of *Perrinet Leclerc*, only a vague reference to "the writings of MM. Anicet Bourgeois and Lockroy," its authors? Why, from *Perrinet Leclerc*, *The Crimson Cross* derived its being absolutely. Deduct *Perrinet Leclerc* from *The Crimson Cross* and there is nothing left of appreciable dramatic value. And yet Messrs. Rowe and Manuel could not find space in the programme to record the existence of this French play! Why they owed Monstrelet and Alexandre Dumas a halfpenny a piece, perhaps; they owed a thousand pounds, let us say, to *Perrinet Leclerc*. What could I think, what could I say of this, but that truth had been suppressed, and untruth suggested? Possibly Mr. Rowe, in addition to "arranging" plays, writes criticisms. Let him put himself in my place; let him imagine himself entertaining the opinions I had formed—Would he have expressed himself with equal moderation?

Something it behoved me to say in reply to Mr. Rowe's strictures and in my own defence; but I am not inclined to controversy, and I feel that these pages might be far more pleasantly occupied than by this personal topic. Only a word or two more therefore and I conclude. I have no quarrel with Mr. Rowe; I bear him no ill-will; I believe him to be an amiable and worthy gentleman enough; in truth my disposition towards him is altogether friendly. It may well be that what I have accounted inadequate candour on his part proceeded from erroneous judgment rather than from defective moral principle. According to my experience adapters are naturally apt to plume themselves upon their originality, and are never more confident that the inventive faculty is strongly animating them than when they are translating from a foreign language. Some fallacy or illusion of this kind must, I think, have troubled Mr. Rowe when, with Mr. Manuel's help, he "arranged" the ill-starred drama of *The Crimson Cross*. I regretted its failure, and think that it was treated by the public with needless severity. At the same time I maintain that in reviewing the play as I did, however I may have offended Mr. Rowe, I was fully alive to the responsibilities of my position: I was influenced simply by a sense of my duties as a critic.

OUR VISITORS.

By EDWARD ROSE.

THE interest excited by the coming visit to London of the Comédie Française—the most celebrated, the largest, and in some respects the best of Parisian companies—renders

needless any apology for the publication of a few notes on the characteristics of its principal members. That the *troupe* numbers in all, of *sociétaires* and *pensionnaires*, forty-eight, will excuse me from any attempt at a complete description: that these notes are the result of personal observation may give them some value to those who have had little opportunity to study a very interesting school of art.

To begin with the *doyen* of the company, and perhaps its most famous member: M. Edmond Got is a man of only fifty-five, but he has held a prominent position at the "first theatre in Europe" during more than half his life; it was in 1847 that he first appeared there, in the part of Alain in *L'Héritier*. His literary taste and knowledge, his high general culture, have won for him the respect of all educated Paris—"he might be an Academician," I was told; and this is no mean compliment from a Frenchman, in spite of Piron's scoffing epitaph. It is very difficult to fairly describe his acting; he has breadth and impressiveness, robust humour and some pathos, acute and cultured perception of an author's meaning, the utmost conscientiousness, thorough knowledge of his art, a certain originality, or at least *definiteness*, of style—everything, I think one might say, except genius. He is not a great actor; one is apt now and then to grow a little tired of him; but in many parts—let me mention, above all, his M. Poirier—he approaches very near perfection; he is almost always good, generally very good; and never makes a mistake—except when he perhaps attempts pure low-comedy parts, like that in *Amphitryon* (a bad part), when he is downright dull.

Delaunay, the most famous of living stage-lovers, is an actor of a great though studied charm, and of an individuality rare among light comedians. In parts in the old comedy—for example, Horace, in the *École des Femmes*—he is invaluable: his delivery of verse, his musical voice, his picturesque appearance, his exquisite manner, his eternal youth, make him almost perfect in these characters: and he adds a dreamy charm in the romances of De Musset. In ordinary modern "coat and trouser" pieces he is never quite so much at home: here a certain artificiality, an overstudied posing, are against him: perhaps he wants repose, is too conventional—hence his manner, though charming, is not the grand manner. In heavier parts (as *Hernani*), he has been uniformly unsuccessful; they say that even for Molière's *Don Juan* he wanted—to use an expressive word—*devil*. He is, above all, not a realistic actor—his style is indeed highly artificial; but he is an actor of exceeding grace, finish, and intelligence.

Next to these two, among the men, stands an actor whose in-

fluence in the theatre is evidently very great—an energetic, ambitious man, enthusiastic for his art, and in one branch of it (pure low comedy) most excellent, the elder of the brothers Coquelin. That his influence is great I infer from the fact that he plays whatever parts he chooses, however much they may be out of what one would think his line ; and I must confess that, seeing him in part after part of this sort, for which his style, his very nature, his face even (he is singularly like the English actor, G. W. Anson) entirely disqualify him, I had formed an estimate by no means flattering of his power as a comedian ; he seemed to me to possess that amount of versatility which enables a man to play all parts pretty well, with, no doubt, great stage practice and considerable intelligence. But then I saw him in the valet disguised as his master, in *Mari-vaux's Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard*. Here was a part of pure low comedy, yet refined and classical, and he absolutely revelled in it ; he played it, as one of the French critics said, *avec une fantaisie magistrale*. The dash, the fun, the finish, and the correctness of the performance were unsurpassable ; I could easily believe that his Figaro was as great a performance as it is generally allowed to be. A week after, I was fortunate enough to see Got in the same character ; the contrast was most interesting, but entirely in favour of the younger actor. Got was conscientious and clever, but had the fatal fault of not being particularly funny.

Maubant is called by the French the “last of the tragedians ;” he is a solemn and stately person—something like the English Ryder, but, on the whole, a better actor. Thiron and Barré are stout, useful “second old men :” Thiron, by the way, often enough plays “first old men,” and sometimes low comedy, but he is not a first-rate actor. Of Febvre I have not seen so much as I should like ; he plays the quiet, manly hero of the *Demi-Monde* extremely well, and his *Ami Fritz* was pleasant and sensible, if a little conventional. He would appear to be a good and versatile actor, and excels—a rare thing among Frenchmen—in the art of “making up.” Mounet-Sully is often called (with an ignoring of the claims of the respectable Maubant to which one cannot object) the only tragedian on the French stage. He has a handsome presence, and a most beautiful voice—reminding one rather of Salvini’s—which he knows how to use ; but, until his last important character, *Ruy Blas*, he made failure after failure in the great parts of the French répertoire. Exaggeration and violence are his faults ; should he conquer these, his natural advantages ought to enable him to win a name one day.

There is one actor only in the *troupe* who yet needs to be mentioned : the one who, as an eminent critic said, seems destined

to "restore to the French stage the lost art of character-acting," the one young comedian at the Français whom it is always interesting to watch, whose performances one does not know by heart before one has seen them—Ernest (the younger) Coquelin. His style always seemed to me, as contrasted with that of his companions, curiously *English*; and this because his strong point is the one in which our actors (inferior as in many other respects they may be) unquestionably do beat the French—originality. He has faults—he overdoes his low comedy, as a rule; but in certain small parts he has shown a wonderful brightness and skill, and in one, the hero of *Un Mari qui Pleure*, his acting had a charm quite indescribable.

Of the most popular actress now at the Français, Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt, a biographical criticism appears on another page; I will therefore pass at once to the second "leading lady" of the *troupe*. Mdlle. Croizette no doubt to some extent owes her position to the fact that she is one of the very few handsome women on the French stage; but it must not be supposed that she is nothing but a beautiful doll. As the good young women who are the heroines of most plays she is certainly uninteresting; but give her a part which is at once strong and unpleasant, and there is a truth in her acting which astonishes one; as the heroine of Dumas' repulsive *Demi-Monde* she literally seemed to *be* the woman she was representing. That she is a skilled actress, her position testifies; and in parts of light comedy she can be very pleasant—even charming. Hard-working, sensible, and well-fitted physically for the stage as is Mdlle. Favart, she can scarcely be called a very interesting actress. Yet she has power, knows the stage perfectly, is correct, and wins very high praise from the best French critics; perhaps it is fairest to call her a good actress of a school which is now, and with reason, considered old-fashioned; her fault is, in a word, conventionality.

And now we come to one of the pets of Paris—the model *ingénue*, Mdlle. Reichemberg. "She is a flower, a smile, spring itself," said Théophile Gautier, when she had not been at the Français a month; and now that she has been there nine years the public is still saying the same things, and she is still playing the same parts, with not the slightest loss of youth, though no doubt with a gain in art. One of her later creations, the pretty peasant-girl in *L'Ami Fritz*, was almost perfect in its rural charm, but her very first, Agnès, in the *École des Femmes*, must always, I think, remain her very best. And why? Because Agnès is not a true *ingénue*; she is only assuming ignorance; and, with all her charm, I must say that to me Mdlle. Reichemberg always seems to

over-do her ingenuousness. When one hears her voice, when one watches her face or her movements, one is a little apt to think of Becky Sharp. Yet she is an admirable actress, and in her own parts has perhaps no living rival.

Madame Madeleine Brohan, having definitely quitted those younger parts for which her beauty and her grace so well fitted her a few years ago, now plays the stately old ladies of comedy very delightfully. She is not a powerful actress, but is tender, gracious, and pleasant; I know no one who could represent more perfectly, shall I say, a motherly duchess? The pretty Émilie Broisat takes after her; and if work and experience give her confidence and ease without diminishing her charm, in a few years the stage will have no sweeter *ingénue*, though it is a "line" in which the French theatre has always been wonderfully strong. Of the other actresses I need not speak in detail, but nearly all are good in parts not of the first importance—Mdlle. Jouassain, a clever "old woman," being perhaps the most prominent. Madame Agar, the celebrated actress who plays her original parts in *Les Fourchambault* and *Le Village*, is not one of the *sociétaires*, but is only a *pensionnaire*, engaged at a fixed salary.

SONNET DE BIENVENUE.

À LA COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

BY EVELYN JERROLD.

DE bienvenue, eh, oui, mesdames et messieurs,
 Mais la main qu'on vous tend demande un peu l'aumône;
 Et tout on vous faisant des *speeches* longs d'un aune,
 Nous ajoutons bien bas : Debout, vieux guerroyeurs !

Et sus aux baladins, pitres, et aboyeurs,
 Qui font qu'on rit encor, mais d'un rire bien jaune,
 Et que l'Art ne voit pas à se tailler un trône
 Dans tout le bois pourri de nos tréteaux meilleurs.

La coupe que vos mains, vaillantes et amies,
 Comédiens, vont tendre à nos lèvres blémies,
 Nous rendra fins et forts—nous que leur vin rend soûls !

Avec l'amour du vrai donnez la gaieté douce,
 Et—surtout—le grand Art—l'Art perdu, d'être nous :
 Shakspeare crie, "A Moi !" Molière, à la rescousse !

Fenilleton.

THE COUNTESS-ACTRESS.

BY AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST.

LOUNGERS in the dozy old kennels of cobwebbed Nassau street may have lighted upon a gilt-edged volume of poems, purporting to be productions of the pen of a beautiful young girl, whose face in steel engraving embellishes the frontispiece. The authoress, it is understood, was a daughter of a poet of some repute, who died prematurely, through literary failure and opiates, at New Orleans. There were two other daughters: the younger went mad; the second married, became a widow, went upon the stage, wrote a novel called *Naomi Torrente*, supported herself for a while in literature, and subsequently married a rising lawyer in New York. The poetess, by name Geneviève, was subsequently adopted by Dr. W——, patron of literature, music, and the drama, who was the first in New York to build a private theatre. By him she was introduced to Willis and literary celebrities of that day. Her career in letters terminated disastrously with the publication of her first volume. Next she appeared upon the operatic stage in New York, and failed. Dr. W—— died, and the American public lost sight of the author and the poems together. The truth was that she had inherited a little fortune, and, believing that a future awaited her on the stage, had gone abroad to study.

Living quietly in Paris with her mother, yet surrounded by excellent society, to which her beauty and accomplishments had easily admitted her, she became acquainted with a Russian Count, who belonged to an influential and wealthy family. His attentions became very marked. He was handsome and noble-looking, as Mr. Grenville Murray says Russian men of the better class usually are. He was a man of many accomplishments and fascinating qualities, and when he asked the beautiful American girl to be his wife he found a heart already conquered.

It was arranged that they should be married quietly, and the wedding was solemnized at a Roman Catholic church. In some way or other, by means of a chance remark by some one, she came to suspect on the wedding-day that the marriage would not be legal in Russia unless it were celebrated in a Russian church. Her

husband, being asked immediately afterwards about it, met the point very composedly. It was true, but as there was no Russian church in Paris, the additional ceremony—a merely formal one—might be postponed until they reached Milan, where they had proposed going, and where, he said, there was a Russo-Greek church. The bride replied that he might go on to Milan, and she would follow with her mother. The impatient lover chafed at this, but the girl was firm, though she does not seem to have begun to suspect him.

He obeyed her, and they went to Milan by separate trains. After they had arrived, he appeared with a story that the Russian clergyman was out of town, and an appeal to her to forego this insistence upon a mere formality and set out with him upon their travels. Then the native shrewdness of the girl asserted itself over her love for this titled rascal. She had inquiries made, and discovered that the Russian priest was in town, and likewise that there was a Russian church in Paris. Evidently the Count had been lying to her, and with what purpose was too evident. She confronted him with her knowledge, and he, seeing that the game was up, disappeared.

Geneviève returned to Paris, filled with a determination to compel this man to grant her redress. She went to the American Minister, and, not finding him in the city, laid her case, in the innocence of her heart, before his official representative. Of the latter's share in this history it is perhaps as well to say as little as possible. It will be sufficient to state that when the Prefect of Police demanded Geneviève's papers of him he gave them up. By this time the girl had come to a remarkable resolution. She set out for St. Petersburg with her mother; took a house there, and entered the best society of the capital.

Their letters gave them the entrée everywhere; they had plenty of money, and the New York girl, whose mind was all the while bent on an object of which no one else knew, was soon the belle of the season. When the winter was nearly over, when her position as the reigning favourite of St. Petersburg society was firmly established, when no great entertainment was considered complete without a song from her, she began operations. Up to this time there had been no sign of her semi-husband, but she had ascertained as soon as she arrived in Russia that all that had been said of the power and wealth of his family was true. The visible proof of it was found in the fact that his brother was one of the Government Ministers and enjoyed the special confidence of the Czar. This only nerved her for the effort she was to make, the more so as this Minister was a constant attendant at her

receptions, and acted very much as if he were himself in love with her.

She asked, through the American Minister, an opportunity of making a statement to the Czar concerning one of his officers. This was granted, and without giving names she told her story. The Czar was indignant, and declared that this officer should suffer whatever punishment she demanded. He called in his Minister, the brother of the culprit, who vowed that such a man should not be allowed to remain in the armies of the Czar. His uniform should be stripped from him. Then there was a dramatic scene when the Czar asked the name of the offender, and she gave it. The brother, in a transport of rage, perhaps of disappointed love and jealousy, exclaimed, "He shall be hanged!" But she said she would not have indignities put upon him. She felt herself above revenge; all that she asked was justice.

A peremptory order was dispatched to the post at which Count —— was stationed, requiring his immediate appearance before the Czar. He came, of course; Counts are prompt when Czars command. He was confronted with the disclosure, and told by the Czar that he must comply with the lady's demand, which was that he fulfil his promise by completing the marriage ceremony.

Man-like, the Count was impressed with the spirit and courage and brilliant cleverness of the girl whom he had once sought to deceive. He would have liked to begin a second wooing before the second marriage, and would have been glad, no doubt, the match once settled, to be a devoted husband to such a woman. But he was very coolly received, with an unmistakable intimation that he need not present himself until the day of the ceremony, and then at the church.

The day came, and the half-married maid appeared, dressed wholly in black, as was her mother. The sombre bride met her husband at the altar, for she would not even walk up the aisle with him. The ceremony was performed. At its conclusion she made him a stately salute, walked down the aisle and out of the church, stepped into a carriage stationed there in readiness for a long journey, and set out at once for the frontier. She has never seen her husband since.

Returning to Paris, she devoted herself earnestly to study, and in course of time became, as she is now, one of the queens of the stage. But few of the many thousand persons who have felt the beauty and power of her acting are aware of her exalted rank.

En Passant.

THE American papers give us full details of the attempt to assassinate Mr. Edwin Booth during a performance of *Richard III.* at Mr. Vickers's Theatre, Chicago, on the evening of the 23rd of April. Mr. Booth had just begun the soliloquy in the last act when he heard two pistol shots, and on looking up saw a man sitting at the lower corner of the gallery on the right side of the house and cocking a revolver. It then occurred to him that the man was either drunk or mad and was firing recklessly. He did not imagine that he was himself being shot at. Fearing, however, that his wife, who was behind the scenes, would be frightened at the disturbance, Mr. Booth left the stage in order to reassure her, and soon afterwards returned and finished the play. The would-be assassin, on being arrested, stated that his name was Mark Gray, that he was a dry-goods clerk at St. Louis, and that he had for three years intended to kill Mr. Booth on account of an injury done to him. Letters found upon him indicated that he was insane.

THE *Saturday Review* institutes an interesting comparison between Mdlle. Bernhardt and Miss Ellen Terry. The latter, the writer says, "is to the English stage what the other is to the French. The two actresses are superficially about as unlike as may be, and yet their method is radically the same; or, in other words, they are both true actresses. It must of course be admitted that Miss Terry has not yet had such opportunities of displaying her powers as have fallen to the lot of Mdlle. Bernhardt; nor has she yet attained the perfection of art which Mdlle. Bernhardt can, when she chooses to take the trouble, display; but to her, as to Mdlle. Bernhardt, one may safely apply the much-misused term of genius. Like Mdlle. Bernhardt, Miss Ellen Terry has the semblance of spontaneousness; and, like her, she is always identified with every thought and habit of every character that she represents. There is a further likeness between the two in that both are excellent both in tragedy and in comedy. It is, however, as Ophelia that Miss Terry has won for herself a place in the first rank of actresses."

THE solicitors of the late Mr. Montague confirm the statements made in the letter addressed to us in April by Lord Newry's legal adviser, Mr. Maddox, and inserted in the May number of *The Theatre*. The allegation that Lord Newry had set up a claim on the policy effected by Mr. Montague for his mother's benefit is entirely without foundation; indeed, his lordship has foregone an admittedly legal claim against the actor's estate. It is a source of sincere regret to us that we were misled in the matter.

SIR HENRY ANDERSON, whose death was lately announced, thought at one time of going on the stage. Early in 1839 he played Hamlet at Pym's private theatre, Wilson Street, Gray's Inn Road. The members of a club then assembling at the "Old Wrekin Tavern," Broad Court, Long Acre, undertook to give him practical support on the occasion. The Hamlet was really very creditable, but the other characters were assigned to facetious members of the club, and the audience being composed of equally "funny fellows," the performance was got through in a ludicrous manner never to be forgotten. Hassel, the landscape painter, played the King; Pym, the proprietor of the theatre, Polonius; Hodder, Jerrold's secretary, Horatio; Mr. Hoffman, a solicitor, Laertes; Mr. Roche, then a law student and afterwards one of the Registrars in the Court of Bankruptcy, Rosencrantz; Harry Baylis, one of the most famous conversational wits of the day, Osric; Mr. Lucombe, father-in-law of Mr. Sims Reeves, the first grave-digger; and Henry Mayhew the Ghost. When Horatio came on in a large pair of trunks, which were all that the wardrobe afforded, he was hailed with "Bravo, George! Your tights are not too large, but your legs are too small;" and from that time everything went off in the most grotesque fashion. The prompter was Mr. Stirling Coyne. Of all who took part in this memorable performance Mr. Henry Mayhew, one of the originators of *Punch*, now seems to be the only survivor.

THERE are but few pictures of theatrical interest in the Royal Academy this year. Mr. Val Prinsep gives us an excellent portrait of Mr. Hare; Mr. Frank Topham a scene from the *Taming of the Shrew*; Mr. Arthur Hughes an illustration of the "Property Room;" and Mr. Egley a scene from *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*. Many pleasing memories, no doubt, will be excited by "The Rehearsal," by Mr. O'Neill; and "At the Pantomime," by Mr. Burnard. In the former we see a number of children rehearsing *Beauty and the Beast*, and one of them, the youngest, huddled up in a corner in unmistakable terror at the sight of the dread animal. Mr. Burnard represents two children watching a pantomime from a private box as only childhood can. Grandpapa is in the background enjoying a quiet nap.

IN our last issue, speaking of the applause with which the *Snowball* had been received at Manchester, we remarked that Mr. Grundy, a son of the Mayor of that city, was an exception to the rule that a prophet is not honoured in his own country. The rule, however, is well illustrated by some of the critiques on the performance. Here are a few extracts from one inserted in a paper for which Mr. Grundy is understood to have written leading articles:—"The dialogue is full of the kind of cleverness which Sydney Smith designated when he said that any man might become a wit by practising two hours a day. It is a rapid fire of small repartee of the irritating kind, which can be cultivated, like the art of punning is cultivated, by simply attuning the mind and pricking up the ears. It is like the musical performance which Dr. Johnson reluctantly acknowledged to be very clever, although he wished it had been impossible. It is dis-

tinctly the wit of the pantry and not of the drawing-room. The reflected glory of a prurient play cannot be denied to Mr. Grundy's performance, but it is not coarse enough to be hissed by a very vitiated audience, and it is not wholesome enough to be admired and praised as it would have been a pleasure to have praised it."

Two once-famous resorts of the amusement-providers of the metropolis, Mr. Blanchard tells us, are now changing their familiar aspect. The oyster-shop in Maiden Lane, which Albert Smith apostrophized as "Rule's of the Lane of the Maiden in the Garden called Covent," has been converted into a modern structure for some time, but now it seems the entire business is to be disposed of. Another haunt of the dramatists and literary men of the last half-century was the French Restaurant at the corner of St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square, which, since 1829, bore the name of Bertolini's. It was the first of the kind established, and in 1839 and for several years afterwards it was the favourite dining-place of those who were recognised as the professional celebrities of the day. The house is now pulled down, and with it will vanish a host of pleasant memories and the town residence of the great Sir Isaac Newton.

LAST month a report was circulated in Paris that "les journalistes" would be invited to the last rehearsal instead of to the first representation of *L'Étincelle*. The whole fraternity was immediately up in arms, and M. Auguste Vitu, perhaps its most distinguished member, flatly declined, in a letter to his editor, to accept any such invitation. This letter, with an approving reply from M. Magnard, was published on the front page of the *Figaro*. M. Perrin immediately wrote to the indignant critic, declaring that the story was "absolument inexacte," and pointing out, while aware of the importance of holding "les meilleures et les plus courtoises relations" with the press, that it was an abuse of power on the part of the *Figaro* to drag his name before the public on the strength of a rumour which on inquiry at the theatre would have proved to be without foundation. M. Vitu at first intended to reply, but on second thoughts abandoned the idea. He probably saw that the incident did no honour to the press, and that the rebuke administered by M. Perrin was not undeserved. How easily might Parisian and other critics prevent such squabbles in future!

THE production of the Passion Play at San Francisco created intense excitement among religious people of every denomination. The manager was entreated to suppress the sacrilege, but as he had expended a large sum of money on the performance he not unnaturally refused. The interference of the authorities was then invoked, and the Board of Supervisors issued an ordinance against the representation. This having been disregarded, Mr. O'Neill, the personator of Christ in the play, was taken into custody. It was contended, on his behalf, that the Board had no power to issue such an ordinance, any more than to shut up a church or say what sort of a hat a citizen should wear. Much stress, of course, was laid on the impressive character of the performance. The Bench, however, decided

that the Supervisors were empowered to prohibit things not bad in themselves, and in the result Mr. O'Neill was fined forty dollars and costs.

MR. BOUCICAULT, in a letter to a friend, says "this style of the English drama in its most ancient form must be revived under the most favourable circumstances, but not as produced at San Francisco. To gain a success it would be necessary to have an immense edifice that would allow of the grandest spectacular effects, as represented in the open air at Ober Ammergau, and, as in oratorio, every word should be sung, combined with the grandest creations in sacred music. By this method the very natural prejudices that many felt on the subject would be allayed, and the cause of religion might, as in olden times, be greatly benefited by the production of the sacred drama." This, however, is a point on which opinions may reasonably differ.

MR. PHELPS'S partner in the management of Sadler's Wells, Mr. Greenwood, died last month, aged seventy-three. According to Mr. Blanchard he was the son of Mr. Thomas Greenwood, a popular scene-painter at the early part of this century. His grandfather was the more famous scenic artist of Drury Lane Theatre during the management of David Garrick and his successors, and his pictorial skill received complimentary recognition in Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Intended in early life to follow the medical profession, Mr. Greenwood studied chemistry, and for some time had a druggist's establishment in Clerkenwell. His associations with the stage induced him to speculate in the management of Sadler's Wells, and first with Mr. Robert Honner for his partner and then with Mr. Phelps he became lessee of that theatre. His unimpeachable integrity, his sagacity of judgment, and his kindly nature won for him the highest esteem. He adapted one or two pieces from the French, one of them being that in which Miss Swanborough made her first appearance on the stage.

HERE is a pleasing specimen of Black Hills Dramatic Criticism from the *Deadwood Times*:—We would say, and it is the least and most that we can say, that Miss Fannie Price's rendition of Camille, Saturday night, was indifferent. Her positions are not good in her passion scenes; when she should swell out like a mountain she sinks in like a gulch. That ain't right in this country. She ought to know the audience here is not the fine-spun crowd that she would encounter back East, and when she had worked their feelings up to a scalping hurrah she ought not to give up to her lover. She presented only a fighting front when her lover's back was turned. This won't do for a frontier audience, and Miss Price will probably thank us for this suggestion. We make it for her benefit. The character of Camille is way up when the right conception of it is presented by the actress. Clara Morris would make a mule kick its driver—if the said animal was allowed to look upon her—but Fannie Price excites none of the human passions by her representation.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE Opera season is half over and has been almost barren of results, so far as concerns the production of new works. The only novelty has been the Marquis d'Ivry's opera *Les Amants de Verone*, announced for production at the Royal Italian Opera May 26, too late for notice in our columns this month. If we are to have even half of the new works promised in the operatic prospectuses there is little time to spare. Six weeks hence the season will virtually be over. *En attendant*, we have had interesting reproductions of popular and standard works, and a number of *débutantes* and *débutants* have made their first appearances in London.

At the Royal Italian Opera prodigious activity has been displayed, no fewer than sixteen operas having been added to the repertory of the season during the last five weeks. It is worthy of remark that Wagner's operas no longer attract the general public. *Tannhäuser*, produced May 3rd, drew a very small audience, and was coldly received, although on the whole well executed. Madame Cepeda was a highly efficient substitute for Madame Albani in the rôle of Elizabetha, and M. Maurel was an admirable Wolfram. The important title-character was assigned to Signor Sylva, whose rotund form and baritone voice were not suitable to the ideal of the youthful Tannhäuser. It becomes clear that Signor Sylva will not be accepted here as a *primo tenore*. *Lohengrin*, with Mdle. Heilbron and Signor Gayarré in the two chief parts, drew a fair audience, but awakened little of the real or pretended enthusiasm with which it used to be received before the Wagner fever died out. Mdle. Heilbron, who had previously made a successful *début* as the heroine of *La Traviata*, was a charming Elsa, and Signor Gayarré's Lohengrin was the best hitherto seen on the English stage. Madame Patti's *rentrée*, May 8th, as *Lucia*, was the chief event of the month. The theatre was crowded, and hundreds of applicants for admission were sent away disconsolate. The great artist was in superb voice, and again and again enraptured the audience by the brilliancy of her vocalisation and the pathetic power of her acting. The Edgardo was Signor Nicolini, whose voice is now little more than a wreck, but whose acting is always intelligent. Madame Patti has also appeared in *Aïda*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Faust*, *Il Don Giovanni*, and *Dinorah*, and on every occasion with splendid success. On one or two occasions she has had arias transposed a semi-tone lower,—the musical richness and power of her medium and lower registers of voice having involved the sacrifice of some of those exceptionally high notes which are seldom in requisition.

AMONG the new arrivals at the Royal Italian Opera, the most successful have been Mdles. Valleria, Schou, and Turolla, and M. Gailhard. Mdle. Valleria has already become a favourite, and Mdle. Turolla bids fair to become one of the greatest among modern *prime donne drammatiche* when her fine gifts have been developed by culture and experience. Mdle. Pasqua, as Azucena, in *Il Trovatore*, did not confirm the favourable impression previously awakened. She has genuine dramatic power, but her voice is limited in compass, and becomes unpleasing when forced. The old favourites, Mdles. Thalberg, Scalchi, and Cepeda, MM. Gayarré, Graziani, Cotogni, Ciampi, and Maurel have maintained their positions in public favour, and both Mdle. Thalberg and M. Maurel may be said to have added to their popularity. In addition to the operas already mentioned, the following works were produced last month: *Ernani*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Der Freischütz*, *Norma*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and the general excellence of the *ensembles* has done credit to the able conductors, Signori Vianesi and Bevignani, and also to the stage-manager, Signor Tagliafico.

HER Majesty's Opera has been beset with ill-luck since the opening night, April 26th, when *Carmen* was produced, with Mesdames Hawk and Sinico, MM. Campanini and Del Puente, in the cast. Madame Etelka Gerster's *réentrée*, several times announced, was again and again unavoidably postponed, owing to relapses of the indisposition—a throat affection—from which this distinguished artist has been suffering since she arrived here from America. Still more serious has been the absence of Madame Christine Nilsson, the only rival of Madame Patti. The Swedish *prima donna* has on several occasions during the past month been prevented from fulfilling her engagements, and has been unable to study some of the important parts which she proposed to add to her extensive repertory. The operas produced thus far have been *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Il Don Giovanni*, *La Sonnambula*, *Il Trovatore*, *Faust*, *Iucia di Lammermoor*, *Fidelio*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Rigoletto*, and *Robert le Diable*. Mdle. Vanzandt, daughter of Madame "Vanzini," made a successful *début* as Mozart's Zerlina, and subsequently sang the rôle of Amina. She has a sweet soprano voice, and is likely to become a popular favourite. Mdle. Lilian Droy, a young "dramatic" soprano, has also made a good impression, and so have Signori Frapolti and Vaselli. The American tenor, M. Candidus, made a signally successful *réentrée* as Florestano in *Fidelio*. He has a fine voice, and sings well. Of the merits of Mesdames Trebelli, Pappenheim, and Ambre, Signori Brignoli, Galassi, Del Puente, and Foli, and of the able conductor, Sir Michael Costa, it is needless to speak.

THE play by Mr. Frank Harvey, which has been the one novelty produced at the Olympic Theatre during the stay there of the company formed under the late Mdle. Beatrice, fairly deserves the good fate which has promptly promoted it from the tentative *matinée* to the regular evening programme. The materials are trite and commonplace, the literary execution is at best unpretentious, and there is a good deal of staginess in the conception of some of the most prominent characters. But for all this *Married*

not Mated has the great redeeming merit for lack of which so many stronger and better-written and more original plays have been ruined. It bears evidence of being the work of a practical dramatist, a playwright who knows exactly how to secure in actual representation the dramatic effect which he intends. Every scene tells, and each episode of the familiar plot fills the precise place for which it was designed. We are, it is true, already acquainted with the wealthy tradesman's son who neglects his old love to marry "above his station," with the impecunious baronet who sponges upon the rich *parvenus* whom he introduces to society, and with the chandler who does not find the happiness which he looks for in his migration from the back parlour to the drawing-room. We can guess that the baronet's haughty daughter when married to the chandler's son will make him a bad wife, and we are not unprepared to find that in other ways the connection of Sir Harold Pentreath with his low-born acquaintances will injure them in various other ways. But none the less is there interest for the audience in the evolution of the sound and business-like plot; and there is not wanting scope for acting of considerable power. The author has not written for himself a very striking character in the person of a hero whose weakness deserves its temporary punishment; but he does with it all that can be done by a natural and manly bearing. His judgment as manager is displayed in his prompt removal of two actresses whose provincial crudities of style accentuated the faults of the play, and in his substitution of Miss Sophie Young and Miss Marion Terry, whose sympathetic aid adds greatly to the success of the representation. The most effective sketches of character are, however, those of the chandler and his wife, by Mr. Appleton and Miss Charlotte Saunders, and these are rich in the humour without being unnaturally strained. Mr. Carter-Edwards also distinguishes himself by his well-sustained embodiment of a sleek and plausible scamp.

WHILST those who have the good or ill fortune to have made the acquaintance of *Niniche* in her native Parisian home will probably be disappointed with her as she appears in her reformed state at the Gaiety, the majority of playgoers will be satisfied to acknowledge that she is at all events the heroine of a very amusing farcical comedy. The young woman's life before her marriage with Count Navariski, the Polish diplomat, has no more serious stain upon it than that caused by her occupation as Zuzu, a popular female gymnast; and her motive in guarding the secret which her husband is commissioned by the King of Poland to discover is thus sensibly weakened. But the process of deodorization necessarily involves some injury to the colour and fabric of the substance which has to be purified; and Mr. Burnand, the adapter of an untranslatable piece, is to be congratulated upon his skill in substituting for witty points which have to be cut out a good deal of practical fun which, if somewhat childish, is perfectly innocent. Miss E. Farren, sprightly and amusing as she is, is scarcely comedian enough to make the most of Zuzu's reckless strategy on her return to her old apartments in Paris; but Mr. E. Terry makes all possible effect out of the absurdities of Grégoire,

the comic bathing-man so oddly connected with the development of the ingenious plot. Perhaps, however, the best performance in the play is the Count Navaraski of Mr. Elton, who gives artistic finish to an impersonation removed from the line with which he has hitherto been associated at the Gaiety. Mr. Royce and Mrs. Leigh are relied upon with perfect safety for a couple of minor rôles, and *Boulogne* fills its unambitious place quite satisfactorily.

SIR CHARLES YOUNG'S new drama *Infatuation*, performed by amateurs at the Haymarket the other day, proves to be a version of Legouvé's unpleasant *Louise de Lignerolles*. It is the story of a man who, after being twice unfaithful to a loving and forgiving wife, under circumstances which add to his unworthiness and depravity, is finally shot dead in a duel. It possesses one fine dramatic situation in a scene of self-sacrifice on the part of the deeply-wronged wife, but this misses its legitimate effect in consequence of a suspicion aroused by the previous conduct of the heroine, that her weakness is something more than womanly and is scarcely deserving of our sympathy. The husband, on the other hand, who makes passionate love to a visitor in his wife's drawing-room is an unmitigated scoundrel: no pity can be felt for him even at the supreme moment of his retribution. Except Mrs. Monckton, none of the amateur players engaged in this charitable assistance of the Royal General Theatrical Fund made any mark entitling their performances to comment. Mrs. Monckton, however, by her aptitude for and devotion to the actress's art has risen above her playmates in the fashionable game. Her acting is the result of experience and study; and her treatment of really difficult emotional passages, as well as her bearing in scenes of pure comedy, would do credit to almost any of her professional sisters.

MR. W. YOUNGE'S burlesque upon *The Lady of Lyons* is a burlesque of an old-fashioned but a very popular type. Poorly played and badly mounted, it would fall very flat indeed, nor do we imagine that its elaborate puns and very obvious witticisms would form very exhilarating reading. But acted as it is by Mr. Lionel Brough and Miss Lydia Thompson it seems to have all the "go" needed for an entertainment of this description; and indeed if any performers could be relied upon to make good-humoured but not the less effective fun out of Claude's pinchbeck love and Pauline's ignoble pride, these stage humorists would certainly be Mr. Brough and Miss Thompson. A comic song ridiculing the professional beauties' fondness for being photographed and a duet illustrated by living statues suggestive of the topics of the day, have both made decided hits at the Imperial Theatre; whilst the clever singing of a Miss Nolan, *à la* Judic, deserves more notice than its promising talent has received.

"1313," which is the latest production of the erratic Folly management, is a rubbishy version of a rubbishy Palais Royal farce, which, when its nasty elements and suggestions are removed, becomes noisy nonsense. Miss Alma Stanley and Mr. Wyatt, who display unexpected spirit in the silly trifle, are to be condoled with upon their misfortune in not having chanced upon a better medium for the display of their budding ability.

Venice, as a new version of *Le Pont des Soupirs* recently given at the Alhambra is called, has no dramatic value or interest whatever; the sequence and meaning of the original libretto being lost in the introduction of incongruous gymnastics by Mr. G. Conquest, and of other illustrations typified in Mr. Herbert Campbell's strident rendering of an extremely stupid music-hall song. The singing, however, of Miss Loseby and Mdlle. Zimeri is pleasing, and the *mise-en-scène* is sufficiently brilliant, though, as a whole, the ballets and costumes fall below the Alhambra standard in taste and originality.

MISS ROSE KENNEY, a *débütante* of some little promise, has during the month appeared, much to the satisfaction of her friends, both as Pauline and as Juliet. It is a pity that she has not been advised to thoroughly learn the alphabet of her art before attempting some of its most trying achievements. Facility and taste and earnestness Miss Kenney has; but these, while they make up for the lack of any special physical fitness for the stage, cannot supply the place of experience in the rudiments of theatrical education. We would not needlessly discourage Miss Kenney, who has youth and ambition—two invaluable qualities—in her favour; but lest she be discouraged later on we would urge her, if she really desires to become an actress, to commence her art from its beginning, and to avoid those royal roads to stage success which lead at best to the *succès d'estime*, at worst to the hopeless fiasco.

NEITHER of the revivals which have taken place during the month demands much critical notice. *The Rivals*, with Mr. J. S. Clarke as Bob Acres, was obviously nothing more than a stop-gap, and was sadly unequal in its cast; *The School for Scandal* at the Adelphi, with Miss Neilson as Lady Teazle and Mr. Flockton as Sir Peter, was a curious experiment rather than a serious effort. Miss Neilson, charming as her impulsive passion, her sentiment, and her emotion can be in drama of a certain order, does not shine in Sheridan's witty mirth, and except in the screen scene where, if the truth be told, her very intense feeling seems rather out of place, she cannot in any way do justice to the best characteristics of her style. Mr. Flockton's Sir Peter is poor and colourless, possibly because the comedian—able as he is in "character-acting"—feels himself over-weighted. For the rest Mr. H. Vezin and Mr. H. Neville are as they have before been in the parts of Joseph and Charles; and in names, at all events, the rest of the cast is strengthened by the presence in it of Miss Pateman, Mrs. Mellon, Miss Lydia Foote, and Mr. H. Wigan. The performance seems regarded as adequate by Adelphi playgoers.

IN THE PROVINCES.

TOWARDS the end of May Mr. Sothern fulfilled engagements at Manchester and Liverpool prior to his departure for America. The character in which he appeared on most occasions was Dandreairey, and the *Manchester Guardian*, in the course of a brief

and comic capital is made out of the irritation suffered in the meantime by the young husband. *La Dispense* has little or no dramatic or literary value. A new farce, *Le Bas de Laine*, by MM. Duru, Busnach, and Gastineau, has been produced at the Palais Royal. The plot can hardly be indicated, as will be at once understood when we say that it disgusted even the *habitués* of this theatre, whose murmurs in the last act were both loud and deep. This may be taken as a sign that better times are approaching. The Odéon—the *Marquis de Kénilis* having failed—is now relying upon *Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon*, one of M. Labiche's best comedies, and the Château d'Eau upon *Jean Buscaille*, a melodrama of the most pronounced description.

IN NEW YORK.

AFTER Holy Week a good deal of activity was manifested in the theatrical world here. *A Scrap of Paper* drew large audiences to Wallack's Theatre, and *H.M.S. Pinafore* still figured in the bills of two theatres. On the 12th April, Mdle. Aimée appeared at Booth's Theatre in *Le Petit Duc*, and though, perhaps, not so vigorous and bright as of yore, met with a cordial reception. The Union Square Theatre soon afterwards produced a novelty in the shape of a drama called *Lost Children*, founded in great measure on *Les Orphelines du Pont Notre Dame*, and in a minor degree upon other French plays. It is a thing of shreds and patches, but full of "interest." At the end of April Miss Davenport was at the Grand Opera House, and *Fatinitza* was produced with marked success at the Fifth Avenue. We have also to announce the opening of the Madison Square Theatre by Mr. Steele Mackaye, who says he is "going to occupy the same relative position in the New York theatrical field that Meissonier does in modern painting." It will be good news to playwrights, who are complaining that there is no market for their wares, that Mr. Mackaye proposes to do something to help them. He says: "My plan is this. It is true that the theatrical manager is more indebted to the dramatic author for the money he makes than to anyone else. If he does not get the right play it little matters how good the acting may be. Now I am going to recognise this obligation to the author by paying him twenty-five per cent. of the receipts, and I don't care who he may be,—American, Englishman, or Frenchman,—any author who brings me a play that succeeds shall have that share of the receipts." The opening piece at the new theatre was *Won at Last*. *L'Assommoir* has been produced by Mr. Augustin Daly, but has completely failed.

IN BERLIN.

THE Royal Playhouse has produced nothing new during the past month, and the only *quasi*-novelty was Otto Ludwig's five-act tragedy, *Der Erbförster*, which has held its place on the German stage for a quarter of a century, and has now for the first time been adopted into the repertory of the leading Berlin theatre. The piece is not, however, new to the German capital, having been played so

recently as 1876 at the Friedrich-Wilhelmstadt Theater by the Meiningen company, and Herr Helmüth-Bräm, who then filled the title-part, still represents the old hereditary forester, whose exaggerated notions of his rights lead him into such a tragical conflict with his master. He acts with force and vigour, but cannot rise to the full tragic grandeur of the rôle. Herr Berndal gave a masterly portrait of the choleric landed proprietor, and Herren Krause, Kahle, and Klein were very effective in other parts, but the dreamy Marie proved a character ill-suited to the talent of Fräulein Meyer. As Stefana in Herr Bürger's *Die Frau ohne Geist*, Fräulein Meyer has, on the other hand, a part which exactly fits her, and her acting has in no slight measure contributed to the success of that comedy, which has been played twice a week throughout the month, and seems to be yet far from having exhausted its popularity. On the 9th of May, Frau Irschik, a leading actress of the Munich Court Theatre, opened an engagement here as Iphigenia, in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, a part for which the lady is hardly sufficiently youthful, though her skilful play and passionate delivery atone for that deficiency. Want of repose, and occasional inelegance of gesture, somewhat marred the performance. Frau Irschik next essayed the part of the Marquise de Pompadour in Brachvogel's *Narciss*, with fair success.

THE French season at the Saal Theater came to an end on the last day of April, the principal piece of the last programme being *Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon* of Messrs. Labiche and Martin, which was not received here with the favour which has attended its recent revival in Paris. The Germans are apt to regard M. Labiche as a common farce-writer, and indeed it was not till his works were published that the French learned to appreciate his higher worth. On the whole, the just-concluded season of French plays has been more satisfactory than those of the last few years; several plays of comparatively modern date were produced, and the leading members of the company were not unworthy representatives of French histrionic art, though the company, as a whole, still left much to be desired.

THE Residenz Theater closed its doors early in May. The principal feature of its season was the remarkable success of a German version of M. Emile Augier's *Les Fourchambault*, which was played more than 100 times—a run, we believe, unprecedented in the annals of this theatre. A translation of the same dramatist's *Lionnes Pauvres* was very successful in the early part of the season. Towards the end of April this house produced a new play by Nahida Remy, entitled *Constance*, which turns upon the trite theme of the reconciliation of an estranged couple by the innocent agency of their child. As literary merit or dramatic skill did not atone for the lack of novelty in the subject, the piece was a failure. At the Wallner Theater, the *Lachtaube* continued to attract good audiences for the greater part of the past month, and the great success of the season, *Doctor Klaus*, was transferred to Kroll's Theater with satisfactory results. At the Friedrich Wilhelmstadt Theater, a new operetta by Herr Max Wolf, entitled *Cesarine*, has been so successful that we may find room to notice it on a subsequent occasion.

IN VIENNA.

THE event of the past month was the revival at the Burg Theater of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, which had not been played here since October, 1870. The success of the revival was great, the *mise-en-scène* being magnificent, and the acting generally good, and in some respects excellent. Herr Baumeister, as Götz, was happier in delineating the kindly attributes of the old knight than in the heroic scenes. Frau Wolter, as Adelheid, was not satisfactory in the earlier part of the performance, but as her rôle increased in tragic intensity her acting became more interesting, and in the later scenes she produced some very powerful effects. The small parts of Selbitz, Metzler, and the Captain were represented in a masterly manner by Herren Gabillon, Meixner, and Schöne respectively. Herr Robert was a colourless Weislingen, and Fräulein Hohenfels was a charming representative of Georg, so far as outward appearance went, but marred her performance by over-restlessness. The Burg Theater devoted several programmes during the past month to Goethe, his *Clavigo* and *Faust* having been represented in addition to *Götz von Berlichingen*, which has proved so attractive that it will probably be repeated once or twice a week throughout the rest of the season. On the 8th of May, Fräulein Wessely made her first appearance as a member of the company, playing on that occasion the title-part in Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans*. The young actress was very highly esteemed in Leipzig, where she has been playing for the last two or three years, and she has been received with favour by the Viennese public, though the critics have not given her very warm approbation, and regard her style as rather artificial.

The Stadt Theater brought its season to an end on the last day of April, and the whole company then proceeded to Pesth to fulfil an engagement of some weeks in that capital. The last production of the season was a translation of *Le Fils Naturel* of M. Dumas, which attained a decided success in spite of some weaknesses in the representation. Fräulein Frank and Frau Schönfeld contributed greatly to the success of the performance, but the male characters were not well filled. On the 10th of May the Carl Theater produced with brilliant success the long-promised German version of *Le Mari de la Débutante* of Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy. The delay in the production was said to have been caused by difficulties which the censor raised on account of the references supposed to be made in the piece to Madame Patti and the Marquis de Caux. Nothing in the French original could be construed into such an allusion, and we rather suspect the rumours set afloat on the subject to have had their origin in the managerial desire to excite public curiosity. The piece, however, has merit enough to be able to dispense with such aids, and with a comic troupe comprising Herren Tewele, Knaack, Blasel, and Matras, and Fräulein Zampa to interpret it, *Le Mari de la Débutante* could not fail to achieve a success.

At the Ring Theater, Signor Ernesto Rossi has been giving a series of tragic performances to small but appreciative audiences. In *Kean* and *Louis XI.* his success was very great. He also played *King Lear* with good effect.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IN Milan, the clever Carrier-Rey company have continued their performances at the Manzoni Theatre, where they have been more successful in opera bouffe than in drama. After Lecocq's *Petit Duc* had been given several times with great success, his *Petite Mariée* was produced, but met with a cold reception, while *La Marjolaine*, which came next, excited enthusiastic applause, the piquant heroine being represented with charming effect by Madame Brigny-Varney. The kissing duet in the first act, in which the prima donna was ably supported by M. Lamy, the tenor, had a marked success, and M. Carrier played the comic part of Palamède with genuine humour. The *Canard à trois becs* of M. Jonas was given on a subsequent occasion with fair success. Only a few evenings have been devoted to dramatic performances, to the no small disappointment of those who have souls above opera bouffe. On the 8th of May, however, a pleasing dramatic programme was given, consisting of *L'Ingénue*, in which Madame Rey played the leading part with much comic force, and M. Manuel's poetical drama, *Les Ouvriers*, a piece belonging to the repertory of the Comédie Française, which was so effectively represented by Messrs. Molina & Manin and Mesdames Renard and Gaignard as to make people regret that the dramatic forces of the Carrier-Rey company have been so little utilized during their stay in Milan. The opera season continues at the Dal Verme Theatre. Halévy's *La Juive* was produced at the end of April with a fairly good cast, and was repeated several times to good houses. The presence of Signora Galletti, who is an admirable Azucena, tempted the manager to produce the *Trovatore*, although he had no fit representatives of the other parts, and the result was a terrible fiasco.

IN Rome, the Lavaggi company is at the Valle Theatre. The success which attended their production of the *Aulularia* of Plautus last year has induced them to try another work of the same old dramatist, and his *Pseudolus* has been given with satisfactory results, the acting of Signori Casali and Cuniberti being especially good. The same company has produced a translation of the *Liennes Pauvres*, for the first time in Rome. Since the closing of the Apollo Theatre, some operatic performances of no special merit have been given at the Politeama. A performance of *Elisabetta d'Inghilterra* for a charitable purpose gave the Roman public the rare pleasure of seeing Ristori in one of his great parts. At the Sannazzaro Theatre in Naples, Signor Cossa's tragedy *I Borgia* has been played by the Marini company with immense success. The author was present, and was called before the curtain twenty-five times.

IN MADRID.

DON JOSÉ ECHEGARAY's new tragedy, or "tragic legend," as the author describes it, proved so successful that it held the boards of the Teatro Español for an unusually long number of consecutive performances. Though produced at Easter, *En el Seno de la Muerte*, as the tragedy is called, was excluded from our last notice of the Madrid theatres through lack of space; but the past month has been

so barren in dramatic novelties that we may now examine at some length Señor Echegaray's latest work, which is marked by the sombre power that has characterized many of its author's earlier productions. *En el Seno de la Muerte* is in three acts, and in verse. In the first act we find Count Argelez defending a fortress besieged by the French, and, fearing that he may not be able to hold out, he determines to send away his beloved wife Beatrice to a place of safety, choosing as the companion of her flight his bastard brother Manfred. As husband and wife are about to part, the latter begs to be allowed to remain, but the Count, unsuspecting of the dangers to which he is exposing his wife, insists upon her departure. In the second act we find Beatrice and Manfred in the castle of Argelez. Beatrice has sacrificed her husband's honour to his bastard brother's lust, and the guilty couple live in fancied security, believing that the Count has fallen in defending the fortress against the foe. They are soon disturbed by the return to his castle of him whom they supposed to be dead, and their uneasy fears are not allayed by the marks of trustful affection with which he greets them. A trusty squire of the Count, named Roger, has been a witness of their amours, and, fearing that he may denounce them to his master, Manfred stabs him to death in the chapel of the castle, but before he dies Roger is able to write with his own blood on a piece of parchment a few lines explaining the cause of his murder. At this juncture King Pedro III. of Aragon arrives at the castle to do honour to his gallant subject, Count Argelez, and a weeping woman comes and throws herself at the feet of the royal guest, demanding justice: this is Juana, the lady's maid of the countess and the wife of the murdered man. All forthwith proceed to the chapel, and the king declares that the assassin shall be put to death, but Count Argelez, who does not know the reason of the crime, interposes warmly in favour of Manfred, whereupon the king places before the Count the piece of parchment, and opens his eyes to the gross wrongs he has suffered. The Count's whole nature is suddenly changed; the affectionate husband and brother banishes all tender sentiments, and arms himself for vengeance. Having caused the king and all but the guilty couple to withdraw from the chapel, and having closed the door, which none but himself can open, he shuts himself up in the chapel with those who have so deeply wronged him, and declares that none of the three shall leave it alive. Manfred and the Count successively kill themselves, and as the curtain falls we see the wife awaiting death between the corpses of her husband and her lover. The drama is vigorously conceived, skilfully developed, and powerfully written; and in spite of its unrelieved gloom it has proved highly attractive. The fine, sympathetic character of Count Argelez, and the noble figure of the king, are firmly drawn, but the other characters are ill-defined; though perhaps this impression may be in some measure due to the acting, for Señor Calvo as the Count, and Señor Jimenez as the king, acted with great effect, while the representatives of the other parts left much to be desired. None of the productions at the other theatres during the past month were of sufficient importance to merit any notice.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

THE Prince and Princess of Wales witnessed the performance at the Gaiety in aid of the Isandula Fund. The Princess left after the selection from *Madame Favart* had been played. The first act of *Truth*, in fact, was to follow, and her sudden departure, therefore, is easily to be accounted for. The Prince, however, having conducted her to her carriage, returned and sat out the performance.

M. VAUCORBEIL succeeds M. Halanzier as manager of the Paris Opera.

MADAME NILSSON is not engaged for Mr. Mapleson's next American season. In a private letter to a friend in New York, Madame Nilsson says that she can earn \$1,000 to \$1,200 a-night in Europe for several years to come, and there is no necessity of her risking the trials of a trip across the Atlantic, and the worse trials of a professional tour through America, for \$1,000 a-night. She then goes on to speak of an invincible repugnance she has to returning to America, from the fact that she lost large sums of money in the various speculations she entered into there.

MADAME CARLOTTA PATTI has been singing in Turin.

M. BONNAT's portrait in the Salon of M. Victor Hugo represents the poet seated, his cheek resting upon his right hand. "What am I to give you for this portrait?" he asked the artist, when he went to his first sitting. "Your autograph," was the answer.

THE services of Signora Scalchi have been secured for next season at the Teatro Real, Madrid.

MISS GENEVIEVE WARD has sailed from America to begin an engagement as the cheerful Bianca in the rollicking *Fazio* at a Paris theatre. In April she concluded a very successful engagement at Boston as Jane Shore. Mr. Longfellow was present on the first night, and went behind the scenes to congratulate her.

"MR. RYDER," said Miss Faucit at the close of the first Memorial performance at Stratford-on-Avon, "I suppose we shall never meet on the stage again." "I fear," was the reply, "that I shall not again enjoy that privilege, Madame; I am in the vale of years." "Take this rose in remembrance," said the lady with some emotion, "and may God bless you!"

MR. BURNAND suggests that a good programme for a theatrical benefit might be made up of *Sweethearts*, *Engaged*, *Married*, *Baby*, and the *Great Divorce Case*.

LAST month, at the Comtesse de Lesseps', in Paris, a young contralto, Madame Valli, recently arrived from Italy, sang with a success which suggests that she has a brilliant career on the stage before her.

A RECENT performance at the Gaiety Theatre in aid of the Isandula Fund was made memorable by the appearance in it of Mr. Irving, Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. Vezin, and other well-known players.

IN the last rehearsal but one of *L'Étincelle*, Mdlle. Samary appeared on the stage with a wo-begone countenance instead of the ringing laughter which the character she assumed demanded. That morning she had lost a little nephew to whom she was much attached, and laugh she positively could not. "If Mdlle. Jeanne returns home," said the author in great distress to Madame Samary, "she will brood over her loss, and will not be able to play. Confide her to me; I'll take care of her in the meantime." "Oh! Monsieur, you shock me; how could you dream of such a thing?" "Nay," said M. Pailleron with a smile, "she will be with my wife and family. Her mind must be diverted. Think of the fate of the piece and her artistic reputation." Madame consented, and the arrangement suggested by the author was duly carried out.

MR. SOTHERN left Liverpool for America on the 20th May, accompanied by the Duke of Beaufort. On the previous night the actor appeared at the Chester Theatre. He spends the summer with the Duke and Sir John Reid by the Natashquan river, which, in conjunction with Mr. Florence, he has leased for seven years on account of its salmon fishing. Rumour has it that the Duke of Beaufort is the bearer of official letters to Lord Lorne.

ON the Wednesday previous to his departure, the Duke of Beaufort made one at the weekly gathering at the Green Room Club, of which he is president. Mr. Warner was in the chair, and the Duke's health was cordially drunk.

"WHAT joy among the New Yorkers," says an English contemporary, "when a real Duke appears on the scene!" If anyone dies of joy we are to be apprised of the fact by cable.

IT is scarcely credible, but nevertheless true, that on the morning of the day on which he is to appear in a new piece, M. Lafontaine goes to offer up a prayer that he may be successful. Some years ago, when he belonged to the Comédie Française, a friend met him and his accomplished wife coming out of the same edifice. "The Française," said the actor explanatorily, "revives *Tartuffe* this evening." "What!" exclaimed the friend, "ask God to aid you in playing a part which the clergy hold to be inimical to religion?" "Gently," replied M. Lafontaine; "we prayed that we might be protected this evening, but we did not say that it was for *Tartuffe*."

TRUE worth, like the rose, will blush, we are told, at its own sweetness. "Good," says Mr. W. J. Hill; "I could never understand before why my face is so red."

M. ZOLA, speaking in *Le Voltaire* of *Mithridate*, says, "We no longer speak that language." There is, no doubt, a considerable difference between the language of Racine and that of the author of *L'Assommoir*.

A MEMBER of Mr. Gye's company lately read the following letter from a friend :—"A lady asks me to ask you whether you give lessons in singing, and, if so, what honorarium you require." In reply, he said he was willing to do so for once; terms, twenty guineas for middle-aged and ugly students, and nothing at all for the young and pretty. Then he received this invitation :—"Lady —— presents her compliments to M. —— and begs to inform him that she is at home every Tuesday. She hopes that he will favour her with a visit in order to decide what honorarium he should receive for his lessons!" Clever lady!

IN the course of a performance of *The Girls* last month a piece of scenery took fire. There was every probability of a panic among the audience, but as Mr. James and Miss Bishop retained their self-possession, and the flames were promptly extinguished by means of a hydrant kept behind the scenes, all alarm was quickly allayed.

"Is there a première to-night?" asked a gentleman who was dining at a restaurant near the Théâtre Français on the first night of M. Hugo's play. "Yes, monsieur; they play *Ruy Blas*." "But that has already been performed." "Oh! it is not the same thing; the actors are now allowed to give all the lines in the piece."

THE jeunesse stage dorée occasionally make mistakes. The actresses of the Philadelphia Church Choir *Pinafore* Company, playing in New York, were lately annoyed by the attentions of certain young men who gathered around the stage entrance to the Broadway Theatre. One evening a young man smilingly spoke to Hebe, and was incontinently knocked down by the *Pinafore* boatswain.

SOME forty years ago the programme of one of the concerts of the Norwich Musical Festival contained the following list of pieces and of singers. It can hardly be considered overloaded as regards punctuation: "Comfort ye Mr. Hobbs, But who may abide Mr. Balfe, Behold a virgin Mr. Young, Behold darkness shall cover Mr. Phillips, Rejoice greatly Miss Birch, He shall feed Miss Hawes, Come unto me Madame Stockhausen."

MR. BYRON says that woman's sphere is that she will never find a husband.

THE man recently in possession at Drury Lane bought a cheap edition of Shakspeare, and frequently made night hideous by declaiming effective speeches to the empty house. There are dark rumours afloat that he intends to make a provincial tour, announcing himself as having "just concluded an engagement at the 'National' Theatre."

AN American critic recently wrote that Mr. Lawrence Barrett's Dutch dialect was almost perfect in his illustration of the "Man o' Airrie."

M. LASSALLE, the tenor, was recently obliged, as a "territorial," to do military duty for fourteen days at Vincennes. However, he obtained permission to exchange his uniform for that of Sévère or Scindia when *Polyeucte* or *Le Roi de Lahore* was played.

THE place of *Caste* at the Prince of Wales's will shortly be taken by *Sweethearts* and *Good for Nothing*, with Mrs. Bancroft in both pieces.

MR. ALBERY is adopting *Le Bourgeois de Pontarcy* for the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

MR. HARE—his lease of the Court Theatre having expired—is about to take the St. James's Theatre. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal will be connected with him in the enterprise. The Court Theatre is likely to fall into the hands of Mr. Wilson Barrett.

THE receipts on the first nights of *The Girls* were largely in excess of those of the first nights of *Our Boys*. The booking in advance is unprecedented.

THE *Wicked Major*, a comedy by Mr. Byron, is in rehearsal at the Criterion Theatre.

Drink, as the English version of *L'Assommoir* is called, is on the point of being brought out at the Princess's. Since Mr. Reade undertook the work of adapting the play his trenchant advertisement as to the superiority of "English dramas" to "French sensation" has been stopped.

MR. HATTON and Mr. Davey have prepared an English version of *Marion Delorme*.

NEWS for Mr. Hatton and Mr. Matthison. The authoress of *That Lass o' Lowrie's* has finished a tragic story of artist life in the Quartier Latin.

THE widow of the late Mr. Halliday died on the 9th of May, never having recovered from the shock of her husband's death.

MR. ARTHUR GARNER and his company have sailed for Australia.

THE reconstruction of Sadler's Wells Theatre is proceeding apace, and Mrs. Bateman's campaign will soon be commenced.

ENCOURAGED by the success on the stage of *L'Assommoir*, M. Zola is turning his story of *Rougon-Macquart* into a play.

MDLLE. PRIEUR, better known as Mdlle. Melanie, has died in Paris, aged seventy-two. Her Vicomtesse in the *Demi-Monde* was a remarkable performance.

A NEW theatre, to be called the Teatro Nazionale, is in course of construction at Florence. The stage will be larger than that of the Scala, Milan.

THE *Locataires de M. Blondeau* is the title of a piece just received at the Palais Royal. The author is M. Chivot.

MR. BOUCICAULT will open Booth's Theatre, New York, in October, with comic opera, but will appear at the same time at Wallack's Theatre in a new Irish drama from his own pen.

MR. LESTER WALLACK has ordered a monument of Westerly granite, at a cost of 1,000 dollars, to be placed over Mr. Montague's grave. The design is plain, and the names "Montague" and "J. H. Mann" are cut in relief.

MR. BOUCICAULT fulfilled an engagement at San Francisco in April.

Literature.

A VERY NEW HAMLET.

IT is one of the most wonderful and pleasing features of what may be called the "Compensatory Principle" which prevails in this world, that while from time to time a genius is born whose works are not easily comprehensible by the majority of mankind, there is sure to arise, sooner or later, another genius who by his marvellous critical insight is able to make the mystic beauties of his predecessor comprehensible to the meanest capacity. Hamlet has been regarded, hitherto, as one of those master creations of genius as to the complete interpretation of which the greatest intellects must be content to differ. But now all differences on this subject should cease; for lately has arisen in the pages of Blackwood, a prophet, or—shall we say a magician—to whom all the moral and intellectual intricacies of that many-sided character are clear as the noon-day sun, and as plain as the nose on his face or on that of any of his readers. It is not Mr. Furnivall this time, but a veiled Prophet, veiled in modesty and in elegant language, who has come forth to set all the disputants about the real meaning of Shakspeare's great creation right once and for all. Henceforth there must be but one Hamlet, and Mr. Ebony, shall we call him? is his Prophet.

It was in the April number of that time-honoured magazine that the great revelation was published; professedly it was a criticism on Mr. Irving's Hamlet; in reality it was a final and never-to-be-reversed judgment on all the points that have been discussed and argued by such paltry authorities as Schlegel, Goethe, Coleridge, Hazlitt, &c. We tremble at our own audacity, but we are going, nevertheless, to dispute the decision. First, as to Mr. Ebony's exposition of the play and of the principal character. It is very pretty writing, there is no denying that. Contradiction is the essence of human nature—according to some authorities, chiefly female—and so it is of Mr. Ebony's Hamlet. He is "a wonderful being whom we never completely understand," yet "our own ideal of the noble Dane and intimate acquaintance with his real being save his representative from entire failure." Perhaps the first we

embraces humanity in general, while the "*our own*" only embraces the Prophet himself. However, let us examine his elaborate exposition of Hamlet in detail. "To ourselves Hamlet is the greatest instance of that disenchantment which is, of all the miseries in the world, the one most crushing and most general." Good, very good; but not quite so new as the Prophet seems to think. Then follows a comparison of Hamlet with Leopardi, an Italian author with whom, we venture to state, not one in a hundred men of even wide reading and of cultivation above the average, is at all acquainted. But our "Prophet" is; and so his comparisons are safe, if not "odorous." Then follows a long passage of very pretty, but rather incomprehensible writing, the gist of which is that Hamlet has been so disenchanted with the world that "what he wants is more than a vengeance; it is a re-creation." It would be impossible in the space at our command to follow Mr. Ebony through his long and somewhat bewildering explanation of Hamlet's character. Throughout his analysis of the play, as far as it concerns the hero, he loses sight entirely of that passionate devotion to his father which is the keystone of Hamlet's motives. No doubt the shock which his whole moral nature receives from the conduct of his mother is very terrible, but the main force of that shock is derived from the, to him, utterly inconceivable treachery which she has displayed towards his father; so rooted in his soul is the reverence, we may almost say the worship of his father that he cannot conceive his mother or any one else transferring their affection or their allegiance from that father to his vile uncle. That Hamlet loved his mother cannot be denied, but that his love for her could compare with the almost idolatrous devotion which he felt towards his father no careful reader of Shakspeare's play can ever believe. Nevertheless, passages must occur to the memory of every one acquainted with the text which show beyond dispute that to Hamlet his murdered and outraged father was the type of everything noble and virtuous on this earth; and that the great "disenchantment" which he suffered when he was so abruptly summoned to that father's funeral was not in the mere falseness and corruption of all around him, but in their amazing indifference to the memory of one whom he could not conceive any one knowing and not regarding with affectionate reverence.

"The 'vacillation' with which Hamlet is continually credited, and of which so much has been said, is all confined to the untold period between the appearance of the ghost and the point at which the story resumes, with the treacheries of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and of Ophelia." This sentence shows better than any other which we can select the marvellous inability of the Pro-

phet to comprehend the subject which he undertakes to expound. Hamlet has one clear duty solemnly enjoined him by his father's ghost in the first act :

If ever thou didst thy dear father love,
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

It is impossible to conceive a more explicit command ; and how imperative this duty of revenge is to Hamlet's conscience is clear from his soliloquies and from his words in the closet scene when the ghost reappears to him. To say that he does not vacillate with regard to his performance of this duty is to stultify the whole scheme of Shakspeare's tragedy.

In the conception of the play to be represented before Claudius, Hamlet undoubtedly displays decision and vigour ; but he utterly fails when the necessity for action arises. He consents to go to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, of whose falseness he is thoroughly assured, for the gratification of his own ingenious scheme of revenge on them, and not with any view to the fulfilment of the one duty which the supernatural visitation of his father's spirit had twice imposed upon him.

It would almost appear that Mr. Ebony had not read his Shakspeare, as he talks of the "emotion" of the "First Player" "at his own performance," filling Hamlet "with a sad, yet not unamused wonder." One would really have thought that not even the most transcendental personage could have read the great soliloquy, beginning—

Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I !

and have so completely misunderstood the meaning of the author.

Of Ophelia's character and of Hamlet's relations towards her this great expounder does not seem to have the faintest comprehension. According to him, she is too slight and small a creature to have much hold upon Hamlet ; his affection for her is the "trifling of early love—less love than fancy ;" the terrible struggle with his heart's passion, so beautifully described by Ophelia, was "perhaps the regretful, tender leave-taking of the man from whom all toys and fashions of the blood had fallen away, who could write sonnets no longer, nor rhymes to his lady's eyebrow." It is useless to remind such an imaginative reader of Hamlet's cry of agony in the last act :—

I loved Ophelia, &c.,

or of her own words to Polonius in Act I., scene 3. According to this far-seeing psychologist Hamlet perceives Ophelia at the end

of the soliloquy—"To be or not to be," "*with a passing impatience.*"

Soft you now !

The fair Ophelia ;

should read—

Bother the girl !

That fool Ophelia !

Little surprise can we feel that our Prophet fails to perceive the delicate art of Shakspeare, who represents the loving girl as availing herself of the interview with her beloved, which the cunning of her father has contrived, to endeavour, with all the earnestness of unreasoning affection to win him back to her side by offering to restore the gifts which in happier times she had received from him. Here is the most subtle touch of Shakspeare's skill, that while he allows Ophelia to lend herself to the deception practised on Hamlet, he makes her, as a loving woman would, forget entirely the part she was told to play, and regardless of those whom she knew to be watching them, appeal in the tenderest manner to the love which she believed—could she only reawaken it in his breast—would restore him at once to reason and to her. But according to our Prophet, Ophelia's attempt to return to Hamlet his love-gifts and all "her soft reproaches" are but a "delicate refinement of the snare" laid for him. Would that we could be so blest as to see this mighty interpreter of Shakspeare carrying out his marvellous conception on the stage, that we might hear him cry "*in a shrill tone of anger*" to the deceitful Ophelia—

Go thy ways to a nunnery—to a nunnery—go !

adding, as he doubtless would, *sotto voce*—"and be hanged to you !"

With regard to Mr. Ebony's criticisms of Mr. Irving we have not much to say. He begins by attributing to the subject of his censure the greatest quality that an actor can possess, thorough earnestness. Mr. Irving has seen and read many animadversions on the shape and proportions of his limbs, but surely he will be surprised to find himself described as labouring at his work "like an athlete of Michael Angelo, with every muscle starting and every sinew strung to its utmost tension." When we read this intrinsic passage we asked ourselves if it were possible that some Barnum or Farini had written this article with a view to securing Mr. Irving's services for an exhibition of muscular athletics in a tour round the country. Was it possible that the ingenious writer had conceived the bold scheme of tempting our great actor to lift enormous weights and to perform various feats of strength in an

entertainment of his own devising? Anxiously have we waited at the stage-door of the Lyceum on the chance of obtaining an interview with Mr. Irving in order that we might measure his biceps and take a plaster cast of his magnificent torso. We have been politely refused that privilege, so that we are forced to the conclusion that even the ill-judged panegyric before us on his muscular proportions has not succeeded in alluring him from that career on the stage which he has adopted, not without some encouragement from the public. This great critic objects to many points of Mr. Irving's performances: his elocution is defective; doubtless Mr. Irving has mannerisms, as all really great actors always have had; doubtless when his physical strength fails him he is apt to pronounce some open vowels as closed ones and to pause too much between the words of his sentences. But that Mr. Irving's pronunciation of the English language is as a rule defective we cannot admit. It would be impossible for him to retain the hold that he exercises over audiences night after night if it were so. Like all the great actors who have preceded him he has his faults, but we ourselves have heard him go through the whole performance of Hamlet without one single error in pronunciation, and with all his mannerisms we prefer his elocution to that of many young actors of our day, on whose speech the vulgarisms and Americanisms so much in vogue are hopelessly engrafted. That he is too demonstrative in his manner to Ophelia in the great scene of the third act, is a point on which there will be always differences of opinion; we can only say, after many years' study of that scene, that an actor must act it as he feels it; if he believes that Hamlet has no love for Ophelia he will rave at her and scold her; if, on the other hand, he is penetrated with a deep sense of the love which Hamlet feels to be strongest in him at the very moment when he is seeking to destroy it, he will not be able to restrain himself from some sign of tenderness even in the midst of the reproaches which he designedly directs against her sex more than against her individually. The listeners Polonius and the King may very probably be conceived to hear only his words and not to see his gestures. It is for the actor to show by the latter how inconsistent his real feelings are with the words which he utters.

As to Mr. Irving's demeanour towards Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the passage about "the recorders" after the Play Scene, our great critic seems to forget that Hamlet is at this point half-mad with excitement, that he has already gauged the depths of the falseness of these contemptible courtiers, and that something more than "the pang yet smile of the outburst which is far too sad for passion," is demanded of the actor here. Besides, a deeper

acquaintance with the text of Shakspeare's play would enable our prophet to perceive that Mr. Irving has retained in this scene the bitter and pungent words which are added to it in the First Quarto. As to the omissions from the text which are so severely censured by Mr. Ebony, suffice it to say that had he a greater acquaintance than he has with the business of the stage he would see that they are wisely omitted by one who does know something about dramatic effect. The line—

Unhouseled, disappointed, unanealed,

in the Ghost's speech is doubtless a fine line, but to 999 out of 1,000 persons in the audience it is totally incomprehensible, and is contained in the greater and more intelligible description—

No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

In conclusion, Mr. Irving, be his faults what they may, has done what no actor of Hamlet ever yet has done, he has succeeded in attracting audiences to witness Shakspeare's great tragedy for two hundred consecutive nights without any great scenic attractions or without any adventitious aids of any kind. In the revival of the play, with most perfect accessories and with a most exquisite Ophelia, he has been able to fill his theatre for more than one hundred nights. This appears to us to be a more important tribute to Shakspeare's genius than all the prettily-worded exordiums about what Hamlet is, or is not, which such writers as Mr. Ebony, and greater even than he may please to indite, can ever accomplish.

The Theatre.

JULY 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

MONSIGNOR CAPEL AND THE STAGE.



UCH allowance must always be made for an after-dinner speech when the oration comes to be submitted to a logical test by the cold light of a report in the morning newspaper. It is not in human nature, not even in the nature of a dignitary of the Catholic Church, to keep a post-prandial oration completely within the bounds of sober, rational statement; it would not be natural, and we may even add that it would not be desirable. Without a certain amount of extravagance, of exaggerated colour, and of increased emphasis, we should necessarily lose many of the pleasantest and most characteristic features of the after-dinner speech, an institution which fulfils in a manner peculiarly English the requirements of animal and of intellectual enjoyment. But it is not to find fault with any picturesque over-statement that we feel it necessary to call attention to one of the chief after-dinner speeches of the past month, that made by Monsignor Capel at the Newsvendors' Fund Dinner. Rather do we accept his remarks with reference to the theatrical performances now going on at the Gaiety Theatre as the clear and honest expression of a confused and dishonest opinion largely held with reference to the subject with which the speaker deals. The nature of his opinion may we think be fairly deduced from the following sentence, which occurs in a newspaper report at present uncontradicted, of Monsignor

Capel's speech:—"He was told by a French writer in Paris a few days ago that no fewer than fifteen representatives of the French press had followed to the Gaiety Theatre that band of noble men and noble women who came to express the highest perfection of that art in which he in his position was not allowed to participate. He regretted his own disability, and envied those who had the chance of witnessing what was so expressed." These remarks were, we are told, received with cheers, and indeed, until we come to consider their real meaning, they sound like one of those outbursts of generous appreciation which are so generally and so deservedly popular. The Church pays a tribute to the labours of the stage, and the act of homage seems at once grateful and judicious.

Looked at a little closer the pleasant illusion disappears. The compliment is, after all, only a back-handed one, and the courtly speaker guards himself against any danger that might arise from a complete surrender of the old-world prejudice of which he appears to make so light. The actors and actresses are, in his estimation, noble, not only as artists, but as men and women; nevertheless, he in his position must not be seen to countenance their proceedings. They express the highest perfection of their art; but that art is one in which the Catholic priest cannot participate. The entertainment given is admirable, both from an æsthetic and a moral point of view; but it is an entertainment tabooed to the professor of religion. Monsignor Capel's utterance on the subject reminds us of a certain vulgar song which describes how something or other is "naughty though it's nice;" and though the Comédie Française may feel flattered by the one epithet, it could but feel insulted by implication of the other, if indeed Monsignor were not referring to a subject which, by his own admission, he is scarcely in a position to understand. He does not go to the theatre presumably for the reason that he thinks a visit to a such place would be wrong. But by his own *naïve* confession he envies those who commit the offence upon which he may not venture. The players are "noble" persons; but Monsignor is so much more noble that he, in his position, must not patronise their performances. He even goes so far as to publicly regret the disability under which he labours, or, in other words, to express his grief that he is, *ex officio*, too good to indulge in the pleasant crime of the playgoer.

Now what does all this mean? There is, so far as we know, no legal or moral disability preventing Monsignor Capel, and others like him, from going to the theatre; so if they keep away it must be because they are convinced that the play is either a bad thing in its influence or is not worth attention. The complimentary

terms in which the players are alluded to negatives the latter assumption, so we are driven to conclude that some suspicion of wrong-doing still lingers around "the expression of the highest perfection of dramatic art." It can only be this which forbids Monsignor Capel to participate in this pleasure; and how under these circumstances he can envy those who give way to a temptation which he resists we may leave him to settle with his own conscience and his notions of right and wrong. For the lack of consistency in this singular attitude towards the stage a public teacher of wide and deep influence is certainly to be pitied, nor can he wholly escape blame. He is evidently conscious that the Church has discovered its invectives against the stage to be baseless, inasmuch as they are merely the sentence of a jealousy dating from the change of spirit which came over the Miracle Plays when the players became independent of the priests. But notwithstanding a change of attitude rendered necessary by the growth of intelligent toleration in the Church, the abandonment of antiquated prejudice cannot be accomplished in a moment and with a single effort of will. The stage must not be attacked wholesale; its intellectual merits must be recognised, and the art of its professors must be readily acknowledged. But in the same breath with these apparently candid admissions it must be implied that the theatre is after all not the place for professedly religious people. The song of the stage-siren may be praised in the abstract, but it must not be listened to save under protest; its hearers are to be envied, but they are not to be imitated. Those who share these half-and-half sentiments of Monsignor Capel are to be congratulated *pro tanto* upon their advance in toleration, though they cannot be congratulated upon much logical consistency in their views. Much has been done when a man in Monsignor Capel's position dares to speak as he does of the members of the Comédie Française; but much is still left undone when this "position" is held to disqualify its possessor for one of the highest forms of intellectual enjoyment.

GERMAN PLAYS IN LONDON.

THE artistic and commercial success which the Comédie Française is achieving in London encourages us to hope that before long another foreign company will be induced to pay us a visit. The players attached to the ducal Theatre at Meiningen have for some years enjoyed an almost European reputation. In their hands

the art of stage illustration has been raised to a point not yet reached in any other part of Germany. From one point of view, it must be confessed, the policy they pursue is open to adverse criticism. In their eyes the development of even a striking character needs to be a matter of but little importance as compared with the general effect of the representation. In the event of a revival of *Lear*, for example, they would first seek not to provide an adequate representation of the venerable monarch, but to set before us as true and as vivid a picture of ancient Britain, whether as to costume, architecture, or manners, as circumstances would permit. But it is certain that on their chosen ground they are almost unapproachable. In point of *ensemble* they might safely throw down the gauntlet to the Comédie Française itself. From the rise to the fall of their curtain, as Mr. Halford Hawkins pointed out a short time ago, the play is an increasing delight for eye, ear, and intelligence. The dresses and decorations are in strict keeping with home and place. The *personæ mutæ* are never inattentive to the requirements of the scene. Every actor is possessed of enthusiasm for his art; the Hamlet of to-night will be one of the crowd in the Forum to-morrow. It certainly seems to us that if such a company would play in London for a short season their performances would excite considerable interest, although its best actors can hardly be allowed to stand in the front rank of their profession. Many German operas and German plays, it is true, were performed with great care in London some years ago and did not attract much notice. Those were the days in which a French company at Drury Lane were hissed for "patriotic" reasons. But, apart altogether from that, it does not follow that if the Meiningen company came over they would be unsuccessful. For the conditions under which such an enterprise would be undertaken are not the same as they were.

During the last forty or fifty years German literature has attracted increasing attention in this country. The researches and criticisms of Carlyle and Oxenford and others excited curiosity as to the intellectual treasures of the land of Goethe and Schiller, and the result of the Franco-German War naturally served to turn all eyes to the east of the Rhine. From that time a keen interest in matters Teutonic became manifest in this country. The long-dominant notion that an acquaintance with the language and literature of the French gave the crowning grace to an English education was gradually abandoned. The student, the soldier, and the commercial man found that it would be to their advantage to familiarize themselves with the German tongue. Boys formerly placed in a French *pensionnat* are now sent to a German boarding-school, and youths fresh from college are far from unwilling to enter

a Rhenish university and see what Burschen life is like. The language they learn is now well known here, and in all the great departments of English thought—physical science, philosophy, historical criticism, philology, education, war—a German influence may easily be traced. Moreover, many thousand Teutons have of late years come over to London in order to avoid military service, and, better educated and more reasonable in their expectations as to salary than the typical English clerk, experiences little or no difficulty in securing employment in commercial houses. Considering, then, that a knowledge of German is deemed an indispensable part of a liberal education, and that London is occupied by Goths and Vandals sufficient to form a formidable army, is it unreasonable to believe that if the Meiningen troupe came over to play they would have any cause to repent the step they had taken?

Nor can it well be urged that the pieces in which they would appear are inferior in interest to those now being performed at the Gaiety. The German drama, though of comparatively recent origin, a “plant which has flowered late,” includes many creations of undying merit. Down to the second quarter of the last century the stage was almost exclusively occupied by Hauswurst, a sort of Punchinello, and for some years after that by frigid translations of French tragedy and comedy. Then a new epoch began; Lessing led his countrymen to despise Gallic models and appreciate the claims of the English school, and by means of the works of Goethe and Schiller an intimate connection between dramatic literature and the theatre was at length established. From that time until the present the previous barrenness of the stage has been to a large extent atoned for; and even when the purpose of the dramatist is open to question on moral grounds, as in the case of Kotzebue, it can hardly be maintained that the effect is so pernicious as that of more than one French comedy which the Lord Chamberlain has allowed to be played in London by the Comédie Française. Now, with one or two exceptions, the most striking productions of German dramatic genius are unknown to the mass of English playgoers, and we may ask whether the interests of stage art in all its bearings would not be promoted by the appearance in London of a company of players which, like that of the little theatre at Meiningen, have won their golden opinions by their representations of theatrical masterpieces of their country and nearly all the plays of Shakspeare? The difficulty of transporting all their decorations and dresses to London would not permit them to do themselves entire justice; but at the worst they would familiarize us with many remarkable productions, demonstrate the importance of general

efficiency in theatrical revivals, and deepen the intellectual sympathy which for many years has been springing up between England and Germany.

GRETCHEN.

FOR many reasons [the publication of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's play *Gretchen*, which recently had a short run at the Olympic Theatre, is welcome. In the first place Mr. Gilbert rarely writes anything that is not worthy of being read; and his treatment of the leading idea of Goethe's *Faust*, whether we may or may not consider it practically useful for the purposes of the stage, is at any rate deserving of careful consideration. He is emphatically an earnest man in his work, and whatever his brain and his hand find to do he does with his might. Moreover, even those who doubted whether the religious problem suggested by Faust's new character as a priest chafing under his vows was happily fitted for solution in an acted drama, who deplored the diminution of significance in the rôle here allotted to Mephistopheles, and who condemned the weakness of the last act, were yet ready to admit the extreme beauty of many isolated passages in the play. It is pleasant to read such dialogue as that in which Faust unfolds first to Father Anselm, and afterwards to the soldier Gottfried, the bitter misery of his priestly life; it is a treat to renew our memory of that fine sarcasm with which Mephistopheles disposes of Faust's hastily-taken vows:—

“Why, man, you break them every day you live,

* * * * *

You break them when you let your memory loose,
To revel in the rich ripe luxury
Of luscious lips, soft cheeks, and glancing eyes,
The violet breath—the press of warm soft hands,
Or the crisp frettle of disordered hair,
That woo'd your flaming cheek as half ashamed
The maiden nestled, blushing, on your breast—
And yet you plead your vows! Like some I know
Who pray for mankind in the aggregate,
And damn them all in detail!”

It is, however, scarcely too much to say that for the moment the chief interest of the publication is found in the preface with which it is introduced. The public is always glad to be allowed a glimpse behind the scenes; and it is to be hoped that this satisfaction will not be damped by the reflection that it is due to lack of judgment and of dignity on the part of the obviously disappointed dramatist. Mr. Gilbert, then, after an allusion to the favour with

which *Gretchen* was received on the night of its production, and to this exceptional favour we can ourselves testify, states that after an experience of only five nights the company received a fortnight's notice, the explanation vouchsafed to the author being that "Lord Londesborough is not disposed to lose any money, and the first week barely paid its working expenses." This explanation, if somewhat brusque, sounds, it must be confessed, reasonable enough; but Mr. Gilbert's reading of it is to the effect that "the company who had laboured at rehearsal for nearly three weeks were unexpectedly thrown out of employ, and the play which had cost its author ten months of incessant toil was held up to public contempt as a conspicuous failure, because the receipts of the first week (in Mid-Lent) showed not a loss but a profit of only ten pounds per night on the working expenses." He significantly adds, "Within four days of the publication of the notice of dismissal, I ascertained that Lord Londesborough had arranged to transfer the theatre to another manager." The moral of all this is drawn in the concluding paragraph of the preface: "It is a source of incessant reproach to us who labour for the stage that our work is careless, that we steal our plots, and that we are actuated by no worthier ambition than to make money. It is as well that those who hold us in such poor esteem should have some idea of the kind of encouragement that is occasionally meted out to us."

Before pronouncing any opinion upon the justice or otherwise of this complaint, it will be only fair to the late management of the Olympic Theatre to hear the other side in the person of Mr. Henry Neville, who writes, "I alone am responsible for the withdrawal of *Gretchen* and subsequent transfer of the lease. The true reason for both was the failure of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's play. The receipts falling as low as £17. 10s. 6d. Miss Josephs, to whom I let the theatre, kindly undertook all my responsibilities, and *Gretchen* would have been continued had the receipts justified it." To those who know Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Neville it will be clear that there is some curious misunderstanding here. The statement that the profits of the first week reached an average of £10 per night is not consistent with a return of such receipts as £17. 10s. 6d., unless on the supposition that the piece very suddenly lost its original attraction: and it will be noticed that there is in Mr. Neville's second letter no direct denial of the accuracy of Mr. Gilbert's figures for the first week. It may, of course, be that when the prospects of the piece determined the management upon its withdrawal few means were adopted for making playgoers aware of its original success, and the public is soon infected with a management's disbelief in its own productions. On the other hand—and

the hypothesis is like the last, pure guess-work—the success may have been merely what the French call a *succès d'estime*, and those who visited the theatre for the first few nights may have gone only on the strength of Mr. Gilbert's reputation, out of curiosity, or because they had booked their seats before they had heard any opinions expressed concerning the new play.

But in whatever way we may reconcile or attempt to reconcile the difference between the account given by manager and author of the actual pecuniary results of the production, we can scarcely fail to recognise that even though Mr. Gilbert deserves sympathy, Mr. Neville does not deserve the reproach implied by the preface to *Gretchen*. Mr. Gilbert was doubtless unlucky in making a delicate and dangerous experiment at a theatre which seems to have been on the eve of important changes, but Mr. Neville, or Lord Londesborough, or Miss Josephs was perfectly justified in withdrawing the play, if from their point of view it seemed a failure, or likely to become one. It is not seriously to be supposed that any one of these authorities at the Olympic would have suddenly taken *Gretchen* out of the bills if they had seen their way to obtaining an adequate return for the outlay involved in its continued representation. It was, we may be sure, no question with them of either encouraging or discouraging Mr. Gilbert's efforts, and indeed he is a dramatist who stands above the need of such "encouragement" as that for which he appears to have looked. So long as authors make money by their plays, whether this making of money be or be not their worthiest ambition, they must be content to place themselves on the same footing as other paid producers so far as the financial results of their labours are concerned.

The importation of sentiment of any kind into the question seems to us entirely out of place. We should welcome a manager able and willing to carry on a theatre for the purpose of art patronage and without reference to sordid gain, and we should welcome a dramatist who wrote solely out of love for the drama. But we need not blame either if he looks for pecuniary remuneration of his enterprise, and we must guard ourselves against assuming that authors fail to do their best to earn their fees, or that managers wantonly destroy the prospects of the pieces which they take the trouble to produce. No one whose opinion is worth having is at all likely to accuse the author of *Pygmalion and Galatea* of careless work, and he has abundantly proved both the worthiness of his ambition and his ability to invent original plots. But none of his good qualities can ensure him against occasionally making a mistake, and supplying a theatre with a piece not likely, in the opinion of the management, to be popular with its audience.



THE THEATRE, NO. 12, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Yours Very truly
Louise Broodie

Portraits.

XXIII.—MISS MOODIE.

THIS lady, who is of French extraction, and on her mother's side of gentle birth, became an actress under somewhat romantic circumstances. Her parents were in an independent position, but about ten years ago she was reduced by a reverse of fortune to the necessity of depending upon her own exertions. In this emergency, obeying an imperious instinct, she adopted the stage as a profession, and appeared before an audience without having received any lessons in elocution or acting. The result of this rather bold step was such as to encourage her to go on; but in case her early success should lead aspirants to histrionic honours to underrate the importance of preliminary training, on which Mr. Ryder has more than once dwelt with marked emphasis, it will be as well to point out that she began her career with all the advantages a liberal education and constant travel on the Continent and the far West can confer. In 1870 she appeared in London at the Alfred Theatre, and in the autumn of the following year at the Charing Cross Theatre as Beatrice in *Shadows*. In undertaking this character she had to run the gauntlet of a comparison with so accomplished an actress as Mrs. Hermann Vezin, who had appeared in the piece on its first production. How well she passed through the ordeal may be seen from the newspaper records of the events. "*Shadows*," said the *Daily Telegraph*, "is well worth a second visit for the sake of noticing the intensity and skill of the young actress. Though Miss Moodie has much to learn, she has thoroughly mastered the rudiments of her art. The scene in the second act with Colonel Marwood; the disconsolate passage at the commencement of the last act; and, best of all, the death-scene at the close, which was singularly effective, give the best idea of the power of the young artist, which has our best congratulations on the issue of a very difficult task." Another critic speaks of the death-scene as being "watched by the audience with breathless attention." The advantage here gained by Miss Moodie was fully confirmed when a month or two afterwards she appeared at Sadler's Wells as Mdlle. Marco in the *Marble Heart*. "Miss Moodie," said *The Times*, "plays with power and intelligence in the great scene with the Sculptor, and generally exhibits qualities which

promise to raise her to a high place in public estimation." The *Standard* said that in the scene where Marco decides in favour of love as against wealth Miss Moodie displayed unexpected intensity of passion; while the *Daily News*, with equal gallantry and truth, declared that the Paris belle fascinated the audience quite as much as she did the love-stricken sculptor. Miss Moodie's name was now well known, but just as the golden fruit was in her grasp a painful domestic bereavement struck her down, and in order to re-establish her health she found it necessary to reside for nearly a year in the south of Europe. In 1873 she returned to England, and from that time down to the present has made continuous progress in her art. The characters with which her name is now particularly associated are Lady Isabel and Madame Vine in *East Lynne*, Thordisa in Mr. Herman Merivale's *White Pilgrim*, Berthe de Savigny in the *Sphinx*, Lady Marsden in *All for Her*, the heroine of Mr. Hatton's *Clytie*, Madeleine in *Proof*, and Mrs. Goring in the *Crisis*. The first of these, difficult as it is, may be said to receive an adequate interpretation at her hands. Whether as the happy wife of Archibald Carlyle, or as the woman spurred by maddening jealousy to yield to a man whom she loathes, or in her first consciousness of the fact that her seducer had abandoned her, or in the anguish with which she bends over her dying child, Miss Moodie carries an audience with her. In *Clytie*, too, the deeply-contrasted phases of thought and feeling, the joy of youthful innocence or domestic happiness clouded by unmerited obloquy, are expressively shown. Her Lady Marsden is acceptable in both its light banter and deep pathos; in *Proof*, although killed in the prologue, she found the means of adding to her already high reputation. As Berthe de Savigny she also creates a durable impression; first in the concentrated rage of the injured wife, a remarkably forcible picture, and next in the revulsion of feeling in which the desire of revenge is lost. Her Mrs. Goring gives her a high place among the actresses of the present time. "Miss Moodie," says the *Telegraph*, "stood forward to convince the sceptical as to the value of finish, refinement, and grace in high comedy acting. It was not the words only which convinced the listener; it was the pathos of resignation which she displayed. On that weary face were scored the lines of many sorrows. The tired eye contained what Mr. Swinburne has called the 'fire of many tears;' the voice was musical with forgotten memories. The action of the hand, the anxiety of the look, and the intonation of the voice were all in harmony." As yet, however, Miss Moodie may be only on the threshold of her career. Her defects are such as may be removed by study and practice; her acting displays sympathy, and even power.

The Round Table.

ROBERTSON AS A DRAMATIST.

BY W. WILDING JONES.

I PROPOSE to make a few remarks on the principal works of Robertson, and on his position as a dramatist. I need not touch upon his life, as it has already been given with sufficient fullness to the public. Its events resemble those which happen in the career of every literary man nowadays, except a favoured few who do not suffer the buffets of fortune before they taste her sweets. But perhaps it is wrong to call them favoured, for these buffets really constitute the discipline of art; they prevent the young author from throwing his immature productions before the world, and give him that experience which is absolutely necessary to enable him to see and correct the errors of youth and inflated ambition. There are but few authors who have succeeded in making a success at an early age, and fewer still whose successes have received the subsequent approval of posterity; indeed, this world would be a sad place if we had to pass through it without experiencing some of its misery as well as some of its happiness. I leave it to my readers to conjecture how many of our great literary works, even the humorous ones, would have been written, if their authors had never been acquainted with one or another of the various phases of misfortune.

Comedy has been frequently defined; it is the holding up to view the lighter follies and vices of humanity, and satirising them with a gentle hand. The love of money; the littlenesses of what is called, by those who belong to it, "society;" the artificial barriers raised by rank and wealth; the follies of parvenus; the grotesqueness and hauteur of a portion of the aristocracy; any peculiar manners and customs of the time opposed to common sense; all these are legitimate game for the shafts of humorous satire, and are subjects for comedy. Now, comedy requires that the subject should be exhibited in the form of a well-constructed story, that the story should be made up of the acts of different persons, and that these persons should talk. Thus, we see that comedy is composed of three ingredients, Plot, Character, and Dialogue.

Robertson may be styled the author of a new school of comedy, for his plays differ altogether in character from those of other celebrated authors up to his time. His comedies bear the same

relation to the older ones that ginger-beer bears to strong ale; while his are of a sketchy and sometimes weak nature, the others are robust, and even intoxicating in the fulness of their flavour. Of the old school—which began with the dramatists of the Restoration and ended with Boucicault—I must needs write briefly; with the exception of Sheridan's, the plays were generally of an artificial character, owing their success chiefly to the sprightliness of the dialogue and the ingenuity of the plot. Although they may have to some extent represented life in the reign of Charles II., yet when they professed to portray our own time their artificiality became apparent, and they speedily lost the public favour. This style then died out, and for a time a void occurred in the annals of the stage, until it was filled by Robertson, the founder of the new school.

Society was produced in 1865. This piece ridicules in a mild fashion the efforts of parvenus to enter the polite world. No character stands out prominently in the play, and they are all of them mere sketches, written, as it were, in ink and water. Sydney is represented to be a writer, but if he wrote at all after the fashion in which he acts, his opinions would not be greatly esteemed by his readers. He is a petulant, ill-conditioned young fellow, and no amount of jealousy could make a well-bred man behave as he behaves in the second act. Maud is equally inconsistent in her conduct. She breaks off her acquaintance with Sydney, not on account of his conduct at the ball, which would have justified the act, but on account of an absurd misconception, and professes herself willing to do what is most hateful to her, namely, to become Mrs. John Chodd. Lady Ptarmigan is slightly more natural, but her manner of throwing cold water on Johnny's suit when she learns that Sydney has succeeded to the baronetcy is a little too barefaced even for a match-making woman of rank. One can hardly understand a woman of her position thrusting upon society so vulgar a brute as the younger Chodd. There may be young men of his stamp, but if so they are either extremely rare, or are content to remain in the obscurity in which their youthful days have been passed. The only character really deserving of mention is Tom Stylus. He is a warm-hearted, good-natured, self-indulgent, happy-go-lucky, possessing a fund of mild humour to which he frequently treats his companions. If he had money it would be at the service of his friends; as he has none, he offers his advice, which is fairly good, and, *mirabile dictu*, sometimes taken. The best scenes in which he appears are his introduction of John Chodd to the "Owl's Nest," and his own introduction into society. In the latter scene, there is a small incident—

dropping his pipe—taken from Augier's comedy *Les Effrontés*, which fits in very well with his character. Some of his sayings are pithy and neat, if not very witty. Here is one, for example: "Love is an awful swindler, always drawing upon Hope, who never honours his draughts—a sort of whining beggar, continually moved on by the maternal police, but 'tis a weakness to which the wisest of us are subject—a kind of manly measles which this flesh is heir to, particularly when the flesh is heir to nothing else—even I have felt the divine damnation—I mean emanation. But the lady united herself to another, which was a very good thing for me, and anything but a misfortune for her. Ah! happy days of youth! Oh! flowering fields of Runnington-cum-Wapshot, where the yellow corn waved, our young loves ripened, and the new gaol now stands!"

On the whole, the play is a weak specimen of a weak school, and yet, like most of Robertson's pieces, it is effective on the stage. This result is due to various causes. In the first place, the length of the play is proportionate with the interest, *i.e.*, it ends before the patience of the audience begins to fail them. This remark applies to all of Robertson's pieces, and in my opinion accounts in a great measure for their success. He is never diffuse; he recognises the meagreness of his plots, and wisely confines them within reasonable limits. Again, the dialogue, if not so witty and full of epigrammatic sparkle as the dialogue of some other writers—and, to tell the truth, even wit and epigram become wearisome if forced down one's throat by the bucketful—is bright and animated, and, like the structure of the piece, concise. A third reason is that we are so deluged with adaptations from the French, full of mawkishness and sentimentalism, and only borne with because they have the stupendous advantage of coming from Paris, that it is refreshing to see a play of home manufacture, even if it is not quite a masterpiece.

The next play in order of production, *Ours*, shows an improvement upon *Society*. The characters are drawn with a firmer hand, and the plot is more elaborated. *Ours* is typical of the follies of wealth; and its principal characters may be divided into two classes, those who are rich, and those who are poor. The character that catches the spectator's attention the most is Hugh Chalcot. He is a cynic, and yet a really good-natured one. He suffers from a plethora of wealth; he is afraid to do a generous act lest it should figure in the newspapers as the "extraordinary munificence of Hugh Chalcot, Esquire," and he cannot summon up courage to propose to a girl, for fear that his riches, and not love, should be the cause of her accepting his offer. He has had one experience

of this kind ; and you, my readers, and I know how in our days mothers preach at their daughters to marry for money. Money ! money ! Yes, so it is, and a hang for love ! Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and these unions bring business to the lawyers, and make the judgeship of the Divorce Court no sinecure. Here is Mr. Chalcot's experience, as related to Angus, who is lamenting his poverty :—" At last I met a woman I thought I could love, and who I thought loved me. She was eighteen—blue eyes, sweet as a dream—with yellow hair, with a ripple on it like cornsilk when the breeze gently blows over it under the sunbeams. Her mother made much of me ; her connections *fêted* me. Indeed I loved her, if ever I loved. They all knew it, and she had always showed delight on seeing me. One day I heard her speak when she thought I was not by ; she said—her voice said—that voice to which I had lent my charmed ear so many times, ' I don't care for him, but of course I shall marry him ; he is so very rich ! ' I left her for ever, and I plunged on the nearest downward road. I sank deeper and deeper still, till I had reached the lowest hell. I was but thought a prize pig, fattened in a golden sty. You bemoan the lot of the poor ! Pshaw ! rather pity the rich, who have no natural feelings gratified,—who are barren of love and bankrupt in hopes."

Mary Netley is the next to attract us. She is a high-spirited, free-spoken girl ; even poverty does not damp her spirits, and she gives the reins to her thoughts on every possible occasion, in spite of Lady Shendryn's snubs. Angus and Blanche are what they are intended to represent, a pair of every-day lovers, and nothing more. It is difficult to write a love scene for the stage that shall not appear ridiculous in the action, but Robertson manages to make his lovers talk as naturally and insipidly as they would do in real life. We can pardon the improbability of all the characters meeting in the Crimea ; it is necessary to the successful winding-up of the piece, although the scene in which Blanche and Mary play at soldiers is childish, and more fitted for a charade than a comedy. Played by skilful actors, the piece will probably continue to suit the tastes of the public until a more robust school of comedy—not so much depending upon the strength of the acting as upon the inherent strength of the play—comes into fashion.

I proceed to discuss the merits of *Caste*, which play is in the opinion of many Robertson's *chef-d'œuvre*, and in this opinion I concur. The author's powers have matured, and although it is possible to find many faults in the play, yet these faults are inseparable from the new school of comedy. The characters are more ably sketched. The story is more interesting, and is not

encumbered with any improbabilities, and the motive is one eminently suited for comedy. It is, as its name suggests, an invective against those prejudices which animate society when its members marry out of their own sphere. But in this case the author rather overreaches his mark, for while endeavouring to prove that these prejudices are degrading and absurd, he shows us that the concomitants of such a union are of a character to make most men choose to remain single rather than to defy the laws of "caste." All the characters are naturally drawn, but none of them, with the exception of Eccles, are of sufficient importance to merit a full description. It is not Robertson's forte to paint strong characters that live in the memory of the spectator after he has seen them upon the stage. When it is said that Esther is an affectionate wife, Polly a warm-hearted, vulgar girl, the Marquise an aristocrat among aristocrats, D'Alroy and Hautree two commonplace "swells," and Sam Gerridge an honest and generous young tradesman, enough has been said of them. But Eccles merits a more detailed description. He is an agitator by trade and a drunkard by disposition. With the pence which he wrings from the fools who listen to his declamations on the rights of the working man he gets decorously drunk. Whenever he procures a gratuity from his son-in-law, D'Alroy, he has a friend outside waiting for "him;" and when he returns from the interview his speech is thick and his gait unsteady. On one occasion, when he is set to rock his son-in-law's cradle, he bursts forth into the following characteristic soliloquy:—"I'm as dry as a limekiln! Of course, there's nothing in the house fit for a human being to drink! (Looking into jug) Milk! milk for this aristocratic young pauper! Everybody in the house is sacrificed for him. To think of me, member of the Committee of Banded Brothers, organized for the regeneration of human kind by an equal diffusion of labour, and an equal division of property!—to think of me without the price of a pot of beer, while this aristocratic pauper wears round his neck a coral of gold—real gold! Oh, Society! Oh, Governments! Oh, class-degradation! Is this right? Shall this mindless wretch enjoy in his sleep a jewelled gaud while his poor old grandfather is thirsty? It shall not be! I will resent this outrage on the rights of man! In this holy crusade of class against class; of (very meekly) the weak and lowly against the (loudly, pointing to cradle) powerful and strong! I will strike one blow for freedom" (stoops over cradle and takes coral). When, at the conclusion of the play, he is asked whether, with two pounds a week, he could not manage to drink himself to death within a year, he modestly answers that he will try and doubtless he will succeed. He is one of the few characters

in Robertson's plays which are drawn with any vigour, and, few as they are, they sufficiently indicate what he might have accomplished had he cultivated a style in which something more than mere elegance of action and elegance of diction were required. But we must judge him, not as he might have been, but as he was.

No one will deny the cleverness of Robertson's work, but its sketchiness is apparent to all. The style of comedy he introduced has been called "Milk-and-water comedy," and there is a good deal of correctness in the term, but it is milk and water of a kind not easily imitated. Imitators have of course appeared, in the same way as imitators of all men who strike out a new path for themselves appear; but their success has generally been in an inverse ratio to the success of their master. The chief merit of his plays consists in the conciseness of the dialogue; the sentiments are uttered in the fewest words possible, and never weary the audience by being repeated. But this single merit cannot outweigh the obvious demerits of plots possessing little interest, frequency of incidents of a childish nature, and characters natural in their way, but lacking vigour and finish.

I do not think I shall be wrong in prophesying that the days of the old comedy, which was last attempted by Boucicault, are gone, and that English comedy, at any rate of the immediate future, will be of an essentially different character. It will be modelled on the present French system, that is, it will partake both of comedy and tragedy. The plot will be more elaborately constructed than has hitherto been the case, and will frequently serve to illustrate social problems; and, to this end, it will be admissible occasionally to allow Thalia to put on the mask of her more sober sister. It will have this great advantage, that no writer will succeed in it unless he be a man of culture and thought, as well as versed in the art of dramatic construction. Whether this class of comedy will last for any length of time I dare not conjecture, for fashion is so constantly changing that no one can speak with confidence of what may happen at any distant period; but I doubt not that it will produce one effect which every true lover of the drama will hail with infinite pleasure, that of inaugurating a new era of prosperity to the English stage.

THE FOYER OF THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

FOR more than a century after the formation of the Comédie Française, but more especially at the time when distinguished patrons of the drama were accommodated with seats on the stage—

when the classical heroes and heroines of Corneille and Racine were seen by the audience in close proximity to idlers in powdered wigs and laced coats and knee-breeches—the green-room of that theatre nightly presented a most animated appearance. Between the play and the afterpiece the wit and fashion of the town were usually to be found in the *foyer des artistes*. Every one came provided with an anecdote, a bon-mot, the last scandal of Paris and Versailles, or a scrap of intelligence from beyond the frontiers. Here, at least, all social distinctions were temporarily forgotten; the peer met the artist and the man of letters on a footing of perfect equality. The Duc de Rohan may have lifted his cane under that roof to the author of the *Henriade*, but thenceforward had fewer inducements to continue his visits. In the words of Fleury, the *foyer* was the resort of the best company in Paris, and more than one actor must have been indebted for the elements of professional success to the discussions on literature and art which arose at almost every gathering. The Revolution, as may be supposed, threw a deep shadow over the scene; the sanctuary of Molière, as the green-room was affectionately called, was profaned by fierce disputes between Royalists and Republicans, and the Comédie Française, rent by internal dissensions of a political nature, ceased for a time to exist. Under the Empire the *foyer* resumed its former place in French social life, but not for long. Experience proved that the custom of freely admitting persons behind the scenes was inimical to the interests of art, led to many unfortunate scandals, and could not be reconciled with the commercial system which even subsidized theatres are constrained to observe. The majority of the green-rooms in London and on the Continent are now closed against all who have not a sort of right to enter them, and the desirability of the reform has been attested in many ways. Nevertheless, the traditions of the *foyer des artistes* at the Comédie Française are kept up to as great an extent as prudence will allow; indeed, if M. Perrin should let you pass an evening there it is not improbable that you will find yourself in the company of persons whose names are great in mouths of wisest censure.

Evening has come, and as the curtain is rising for the last act of *Hernani*, we pass through a door in the colonnade, tell the watchful porter that M. Perrin expects us, and mount up a wide staircase. The walls at the top are covered with portraits, many of rare artistic excellence. Here, to begin with, hangs what I am inclined to regard as the best portrait of Voltaire extant. He is looking up at you from a book, with a certain good-humoured malice in the expression of his eye and the smile upon his thin lips. There is a nameless something about the face

which fascinates you in spite of yourself; it indicates immense force of intellect and character, and you cease to wonder that Voltaire should have attained the highest distinction in many walks of literature, amassed a large fortune, and exercised a powerful influence upon French thought. This is the only portrait behind the scenes of a dramatist who was not an actor by profession as well, and there are several reasons why such a mark of respect should be paid at the Comédie Française to his memory. He wrote for the theatre from his early manhood onwards, and did much to uphold the reputation which the French drama had acquired in the hands of Corneille and Racine. He had not the force of the former or the tenderness of the latter at command, though it must be said that *Brutus* and *Rome Sauvée* fall but little short of *Les Horaces* and *Cinna*, and that *Zaïre* and *Mérope* and *Tancrède* move us almost as deeply as *Iphigénie* and *Athalie*. In all other respects he is superior to his predecessors, whether in point of truth to nature, vividness of colouring, delineation of character, descriptive power, the expression of generous sentiments and impulses, and the extent of the sphere of human action he embraces. Then no dramatist was ever so popular with his actors; he liked their society, risked a third incarceration in the Bastille rather than allow the shameful burial of Adrienne Lecouvreur to pass without a glowing protest, and extolled acting as the "plus beau, le plus rare, et la plus difficile des arts." In that art he was himself proficient, as the records we have of his performances in private of Cicero and Lusignan will show. Facing the portrait we have just spoken of is one of Le Kain, who owed much of his great success on the stage to the precepts of Voltaire. The proximity of the two pictures recalls a touching incident. The philosopher never saw Le Kain at the Comédie Française, and might not have undertaken his last journey to Paris if it had not been for a lively desire to know how the heroes of his *théâtre* were there interpreted by his pupil. Le Kain died on the night before Voltaire's arrival in the capital! The great tragedian appears in the picturesque oriental costume of Orosmane in *Zaïre*. His face is flat and round, but under the inspiring influence of stage illusion the disadvantage was so far redeemed that ladies would declare him to be "handsome." And now turn to this full length on the left, representing Rachel as the Muse of Tragedy. How statuesque the attitude, how intense the expression of the eyes and mouth, how impressive the sum of all! It seems as though "a being of another world had descended to awe us by the majesty of its appearance." The romantic drama was in the height of its popularity when this grand woman came upon the scene, but

in her hands old classical tragedy seemed to recover the *prestige* it had lost. Her genius revived a moribund school of art, imparting life to the lifeless, nature to the unnatural, colour to the colourless, freshness to decay. If a truly great painter had arisen to perpetuate on canvas the expression accompanying her "Je crois" as Pauline, or her declaration to Hippolyte in *Phèdre*, or the fierce agony of scorn with which as Virginie she turned upon Appius Claudius!

The entrance to the green-room is down that passage on our left. It may be with a feeling of reluctance that you approach it, for echoes of the applause brought down by Mdlle. Bernhardt in *Hernani* are travelling through a corridor connecting the *foyer* with the back of the stage, and it does not follow that because you have seen the performance about half-a-dozen times that you are otherwise than ready to see it again. However, let us go in without delay, as we shall have more than enough to speak of before the curtain falls. The surprise you feel as you pass through the door is natural enough. This *foyer des artistes*, with its lofty roof and carefully-polished floors, its rare pictures and busts, its velvet-covered furniture and elegant appointments, is undoubtedly unique. The two actors in character costume at the further corner of the room are not just now wanted upon the stage, and are engaged in solving a knotty problem in chess. The dignified gentleman looking on is "the last of the tragedians," M. Maubant, dressed for Ruy Gomez. And now let us look at the portraits on the walls. The place of honour, of course, is devoted to Molière, in whose mind the idea of such an institution as the Comédie Française is said to have originated. He appears in the long-flowing wig of his day, with a contemplative and somewhat melancholy expression in his eyes. Perhaps he is thinking of his beautiful but faithless wife, the Armande Béjart of his old strolling days, or mentally elaborating the first conception of an Alceste or a Tartuffe. In another picture, "Farceurs Français et Italiens," he may be seen as Arnolphe in *L'École des Femmes*. Here, too, is a scene from *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, in which he played Sganarelle. Next to Molière, on his right, is a portrait of his pupil Baron, one of the most illustrious of French tragic actors. The self-satisfied aspect of the face was eminently characteristic. He used to say that an actor ought to be educated in the lap of a queen, and that while a Cæsar appeared every century it took a thousand years to produce a Baron. His morbid vanity, however, was allied to exceptional gifts; the heroes of Corneille and Racine derived a new force from his acting, and his supremacy was never disturbed or questioned. Even in the Régence, when he reappeared on the

stage after an almost inexplicable absence of thirty years, no one ventured to compete with him in the highest walks of French tragedy. Not the least of his claims to admiration was to be found in his regard for natural truth. "Les règles," he once said, "defendent d'élever les bras au-dessus de la tête. Mais si la passion les y porte ils seront bien. La passion en sait plus que les règles." He also wrote some meritorious comedies. As handsome as intellectual, he was a man *aux bonnes fortunes*, and it is painful to have to add that scandal had too much reason to associate his name with that of Molière's wife. A counterfeit presentment of one of his contemporaries, Mdlle. Duclos, now arrests attention. This lady, who flourished between 1693 and 1736, had great talents for the stage, but was extremely artificial in style. Her temper, as you infer, was somewhat short. The parterre having on one occasion made merry over a little mishap which occurred to her on the stage, "Fools!" she exclaimed, "you are laughing at the finest passage in the play!" In her old age she married a man young enough to be her grandson, but was not favoured with his society very long. The lady on her right, in the enormous hoops of the eighteenth century, is her successor, Mdlle. Dumesnil, who to considerable power and sympathy united a marked observance of natural truth. Her delineation of the anguish of Mérope seems to have been superbly impressive. The bust before the mirror is one of Préville, a marvel of versatility. He could play with either depth of feeling or comic humour, his Crispins and Sganarelles being particularly attractive. He is said to have acted comedy as Molière wrote it; high praise indeed. Le Kain appears on the left of the great actor-dramatist, the picture being a counterpart of that on the staircase. Near him we find two of his contemporaries, Grandval, excellent in *petits maîtres du bon-ton*, and Dazincourt, the original representative of the barber in *Le Mariage de Figaro*. The lady with the theatrically upturned eyes is Madame Vestris, a pretentious but cold and uninteresting actress of high tragedy parts. A quarrel which she had about a hundred years ago with a stage rival divided Paris into two hostile parties. The name of the actor before whose portrait we next halt recalls to mind the darkest and most eventful period in French history. Influenced by a generous hatred of injustice and oppression, Talma ardently embraced the popular side in the Revolution, and the production of Chenier's *Charles IX.*—a play which under the old régime would certainly have been suppressed—enabled him to attain at one bound the highest place at the theatre. This position he held for nearly forty years, his acting exhibiting a rare combination of sensibility and force of expression. In 1792, it is said, he

saved Napoleon from committing suicide, and during the Consulate and the Empire was an honoured guest at the Tuileries. How he reconciled his enthusiasm for freedom with admiration of his friend's military despotism we are not told. The portrait before us may serve as a key to the enigma ; it seems to be that of a man of thought rather than of action. The Royalist side in the Revolution is represented over the door by a portrait of Fleury, who had tasted too many of the sweets of court favour not to sympathise with the falling or fallen *régime*, and who, with several comrades of similar prejudices, was thrown into prison and narrowly escaped the guillotine in the Reign of Terror. In the character of an elegant and witty courtier he was above competition. Monval and Michot, two actors of the same period, are also honoured on these walls : the former, taking part in one of the fêtes of the Goddess of Reason in the church of St. Roch, loudly defied the Deity to strike him down, and as the challenge was unanswered declared that no God existed ; Michot, being mistaken by a crowd for an "aristocrat," would have been incontinently hanged at a lamp-post if a citizen of approved patriotism had not recognised him. Next we come to Ligier, the original representative of Louis XI. in Casimir Delavigne's play. The only other pictures in the room are two groups by the actor Geoffroy ; the first exhibiting Rachel, Mars, Plessy, Regnier, Guyon, Samson, and others, and the second, M. Got, Madame Lafontaine, Madame Favart, Mdle. Jouassain, M. Bressant, M. Delaunay, and M. Coquelin l'aîné. But soft : many persons are looking in—among others, M. Hugo, M. Sardou, M. Dumas, M. Sarcey, M. Augier, M. Gambetta, M. Offenbach, and last, but not least, the Prince of Wales, attended by M. Febvre. Next, with pride in his port and defiance in his eye, M. de Blowitz squeezes through the—to him—narrow doorway, to be followed a few seconds afterwards by the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. The fall of the curtain is betokened by long applause ; the players engaged in the piece drop one by one into the room ; Mdle. Bernhardt recovers from the trying effect of the last scene so far as to receive with charming grace the compliments addressed to her, and the conversation becomes general and full of spirit.

The *bon quart d'heure* is soon, too soon, over. The afterpiece commences ; the company in the green-room disperses. I fear that the bright little scene in which we have taken part has not disposed you to look at the other pictures behind the scenes, but at the risk of fatiguing you I will beg the favour of your company on a brief trip through the corridor already referred to. Here is Mdle. Desmares, who at the beginning of the eighteenth century was elected to succeed the illustrious Champmeslé in the leading

tragic rôles, but who after a few years' service was compelled to yield the palm to Adrienne Lecouvreur. Hard by is a portrait of the latter as the Muse of Tragedy, a compliment in all respects well deserved. No actress seems to have been more successful in moving an audience to terror, admiration, or tears. The story of her misplaced affection for Maurice de Saxe is too well known to be retold now, but I may as well remark that as she died too suddenly to allow of her renouncing her profession in the hearing of a *cure*, her body was buried at night, in unconsecrated ground, with none of the usual rites. The remains of Molière had been treated with scarcely greater respect. If this was Christianity we can hardly be surprised that Voltaire and others came to turn it into ridicule. From Mdlle. Lecouvreur we pass to a less clever but even more beautiful woman, Mdlle. Gaussin, the original representative of Zaïre, a part to which her sensuous, indolent, voluptuous grace was eminently well-adapted. Near this picture is an engraving after Van Loo of Mdlle. Clairon, an engraving presented to the actress by Louis Quinze. Less natural, perhaps, than Mdlle. Lecouvreur and Mdlle. Dumesnil, Mdlle. Clairon excited enthusiasm by magnificent bursts of passion, proved for the first time the importance of attention to detail, and, aided by Le Kain, set the example of studying historical accuracy in the matter of costume. In 1765, rather than have to play with a man who had been convicted of disgraceful conduct, but who had influence enough to keep his position at the theatre, she withdrew into private life. It was in the same year that Garrick visited Paris, an event of which we have a pleasing memento here in the preservation of a copy of the engraving representing him as Richard III. in Bosworth Field. A portrait of Mdlle. Raucourt next fixes our attention. This actress achieved remarkable success at the Comédie Française in 1772, but was soon afterwards compelled by the persecutions of a little army of creditors to fly to the Hague. Fortunately, however, she had a friend in Marie Antoinette, and on promising to be more careful for the future was relieved from pecuniary embarrassment and reinstated at the theatre. The only other portrait to which I must direct your notice is "Talma as Nero," an acceptable addition to the store.

Before leaving the theatre we may profitably spend a few minutes in the property-room and in the library. Here is the chair in which Molière sat during his last performance. That quaint-looking bell formerly hung in the tower of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and was used to give the signal for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. The National Convention, at the instance of

Chénier, presented it to the comedians in order that it might be tolled at the back of the stage when, in his *Charles IX.*, the hour of the Huguenots is supposed to have come. It now does duty in funeral processions, &c., and may be heard if *Marion Delorme* is represented. The library, which is well used by the company, contains the registers of the theatre, editions old and new of French plays, memoirs bearing on the history of the stage, essays on the art of acting, autograph letters, &c. Mr. Van Laun's translation of Molière is also to be found there, together with files of *The Theatre* from the commencement of that publication. Two of the letters are of great interest and value. One, bearing the signature of Molière's wife, relates to an alteration by Thomas Corneille of *Le Festin de Pierre*:—"Je, sousigné, confesse avoir reçu de La Troupe en deux payemens La Somme de deux mil deux cens Livres tant pour moy que pour Mr. de Corneille de laquelle somme je suis convenue avec lad. Troupe et dont elle est demeurée d'accord pour l'achept de la pièce du Festin de pierre qui m'appartenoit que J'ay fait mettre en vers par led. Sr. de Corneille. Sçavoir le premier paiement de neuf cent douze livres douze sols sur les chambrées de lad. piecè du Festin de Pierre et douze cent quatre-vingt sept livres huit sols sur les deniers de la bourse commune de la Troupe qui est restée es mains de Mr. de La Grange. Lesquelles deux sommes font ensemble celle de deux mil deux cent livres dont Je quitte lad. troupe et tout autres. Fait à Paris ce troisième Juillet mil six cent soixante et dix sept.—ARMANDE GRESINDE CLAIRE ERLISABET BÉJART."

The other letter is from Adrienne Lecouvreur, and bears date 1721:—"Je suplie la Compagnie de ne point conter sur moy pour jeudi dans *Britannicus* sy Mdlle. Aubert y joue Agripinne. Sy l'on peut engager Mdlle. Dangeville a avoir la bonté de jouer Junie on me fera grand plaisir, mais rien ne me pourra determiner a changer la résolution que jay prise de ne point jouer avec Mdlle. Aubert."

FIRST NIGHTS.

BY JOHN AUSTEN.

PERSONS who ought to know tell us that the first representation of a play is likely to be the worst, except perhaps the second, when the players have lost their original excitement, but have not lost their original nervousness. It may be so, and the fancy for going to first nights may be a mistake, but it is a very

popular mistake, nevertheless. There has never been such difficulty as there is now in getting a seat for a *première*. You may apply at the box-office of the Lyceum, or Court, or Prince of Wales the moment it is open and fail to get what you want, which is, indeed, often to be more readily obtained for love than for money. In certain circles it is nowadays the fashion to "assist" at "first nights" just as it is the fashion to visit the opera on Patti or Nilsson nights; and we know that it is never of any good to attempt to argue down a fashion. But, indeed, there is much to be said in defence of this new, or, at any rate, revived taste. There is something more than idle curiosity in the desire to see whether a *War* is to be hissed, or a *Caste* is to be cheered, whether a *Fair France* is to be hooted or a *Colleen Bawn* is to be clapped, whether an *Our Boys* is to commence its thousands of nights or an *Ecarté* is to die on its birth-night. Leaving out of sight the fact that no subsequent performances of *Trial by Jury* or *The Happy Land* could ever reproduce the electrical effect which they had when they first surprised their unprepared hearers, there remains to be taken into account the charm of feeling oneself one amongst an audience asked to give its all-important verdict upon an untried work or representation; and no further apology is needed to preface an invitation to our friends to accompany us to a first night at the play.

The overture, to which no one listens, is over; the critic who is always lecturing the public on the enormity of coming in late has set the example which he does not wish to see followed; the attendants are cajoled and bribed into filling up every available gangway with chairs, and the new comedy is nervously proceeding on its way. We have nothing to note at present, nothing save the peculiar keenness with which every point is taken up by the house, either for good or for evil. But as we glance round and become conscious of the eager attention bestowed upon every word of the performance, we feel, outsiders though we be, that there is in this interest an excitement not to be found in the interest which will be aroused in this same work during a season of some hundred nights to come. And now the first act is over; the unexpected hit has been made; the scene, perhaps, on which the author had counted so much has gone for nothing. The surprises incidental to a first night have commenced.

Turning our backs upon the stage we can look around us at our leisure. The first thing to strike us is the fact that everybody seems to know everybody else, whilst at the least half of those in stalls and boxes appear to take some sort of personal interest in the outcome of the evening. That fair-haired lady with the eager,

sympathetic face, is the elder sister of the young actress to whom has been allotted the rôle of the heroine; and the anxiety which has caused her to drink in so thirstily every word of the dialogue is easily to be accounted for, if there is any truth in the rumour that she has coached the *débutante* in her first important part. That placid little woman, who ought to be brimming over with excitement and scarcely able to contain her desire to lead the applause, is the wife of the hero of the evening, the author of the new comedy, and it may be that her apparent concentration of interest in the clothes of her neighbours is assumed only in order to cloak deeper feelings. Another lady's noticeable attention to every scene in which a certain actress appears is referred by the initiated to her already-regretted refusal of the rôle found so telling. She is by no means the only actress present "in front;" plenty of others are to be recognised even by one who is not a constant "first-nighter." If an actress be not herself at work on the stage, her first wish is to see her brother- and sister-players engaged upon her favourite occupation, and the wish is one that she generally finds it possible to gratify. And very pleasant it is to see how generously ready she is with her applause whenever there is a chance for outspoken praise, and how fully she recognises any difficulties which may be in the way of success. The task is one which survives all direct connection with the stage, and actresses who have married prosperously and abandoned their art years ago retain their prescriptive right to be present at performances like those to which we allude. Then there are managers who are never absent the first nights of their rivals, and who are generally found selecting for special comment the effort of some promising young representative of a minor character. "Seems to have something in him, that young fellow;" or, "That bright little chambermaid will make an actress," is the remark made—let us trust for future reference—in his mental notebook; but he rarely cares to say anything for or against the production as a whole. He reserves himself, as do a good many others, for the midnight chat of the Arundel, the Green-room, or the Beefsteak.

In the course of our glance around our attention is naturally directed to those whose duty it will be to pronounce in public the opinions which they are now forming in private. We miss, alas! the grand leonine head which used for so many years to be the first which would be pointed out by the playgoer to his companion. John Oxenford is gone, and his place, though occupied, is not filled. But even those to whom the mere naming of the several dramatic critics would convey little meaning may be interested to catch the kindly smile of the journalist whose Christmas work in the theatre

has delighted young and old for more than twenty years, and to watch him as from his rich stores of theatrical fact he supplies what may be needed by the younger members of his craft. This is not one of the gentlemen of the press who talk for the benefit of their neighbours of the number of notices which they may have to "knock off" before to-morrow night, and who deliver their spoken opinions loudly, in order to impress us with their prescriptive right to give them utterance. But you would not be likely to sit by his side for an evening at the play without discovering from his conversation that he fully deserves his reputation as an authority upon his subject. The young man vigorously taking notes at every possible point of the performance does not probably possess the critical weight which he wishes you to attribute to him; the critic who is the most moved to tears or laughter will take his revenge upon the author by proving himself the least sympathetic on paper. The writer who has the hardest task before him is most likely content to scribble an occasional note upon his play-bill, and to trust to his memory for the materials of the column of hasty critique which he will scramble through while other people are having their supper. Every variety of press commentator is here, from the man who loves the drama and has made it the study of a life-time to the indifferent "copy" maker who would just as soon be set to describe a fire or a police-case if only the work were as comfortable and as well paid. There are critics luminous in the most extensive arrangement of shirt-front, critics who appear anxious to be mistaken for Stock Exchange swells, and critics too lazy or too careless to comply with the social obligation of evening dress. Their numbers are increasing every year with the increased attention given to the drama by the public; and, what with the representatives of dailies, weeklies, and provincial papers of importance, managers will soon be hard set to make room for the press.

But people a good deal more interesting to the public than the newspaper scribes are present in the house on this first night. Not far apart are to be seen the iron-grey head of Mr. Wilkie Collins, who always has a keen eye for a play, and the cheery face of Miss M. E. Braddon, who notwithstanding *Griselda* retains her old love for the theatre. Looking forward from a box is the stolid countenance of Mr. Charles Reade, whose eye can hardly help falling upon some one or other with whom he has at some time or other signally differed in opinion. On the other side, glaring at each other from their respective stalls, are a couple of the bitterest enemies whom a malignant fate ever compelled to pass an evening together at the play. The long-haired man, talking with such anima-

tion, is Mr. Frank Marshall, who, just to spite us, will not worthily follow up his capital comedy, *False Shame*; and it is not difficult to guess, from the smiles of those near Mr. W. S. Gilbert, that this most caustic of our dramatists has been making one of his sharp sallies against some fiasco of the evening. Mr. Tom Taylor and Mr. Burnand are also to be seen presumably turning over in their mind jokes new and old for *Punch*; a painter or two is readily pointed out, and poetry is represented in its alpha and omega by Mr. Robert Browning and Mr. Ashby Sterry. If the piece presented is a comic one and is not by Mr. Byron, that gentleman is sure to bestow the heartiest possible appreciation upon its jokes, even if he cannot always resist the temptation to make better ones himself at its expense in the course of the evening. There is a good deal more charity amongst theatrical rivals than is generally supposed.

We are rapidly working through our stalls; the boxes are not always so readily to be accounted for. It is easy to guess why, as that beautiful woman is the wife of a prosperous actor, she should be where she is; but why that vulgar old Hebrew, hanging his coarse, jewelled hand over the balcony? Perhaps he had once a bill of sale on the theatre, perhaps he supplies the bad wines sold in the bar behind. Then, too, is there any reason why that dirty little man should crouch at the back of that popular actress's box? Is he really afraid to come out and show himself? But it would not do to begin discussing the few painful suggestions of the first night; there are plenty of pleasant ones which may fairly claim precedence, as we are here for the purpose of enjoying our evening. But we cannot help giving a moment's thought to the perpetual puzzle presented by the fondness of some of those around us for attendance at *premieres*. They seem to care nothing for what goes on upon the stage. They have not two ideas about the prospects of the piece; they have no discoverable interest in the stage and its surroundings. But they are always in their places on these occasions, and of them we can only wonder, as of the flies in the amber, how the deuce they got there.

As the curtain falls upon the second act the more energetic move from their seats, a task which all managers make as uncomfortable as possible, both for those who crush and those who are crushed. Novelists, playwrights, critics, and the rest, form little knots, and talk over the latest addition to the plays of our stage; and it is curious, as showing how general is the conversation, to notice the rapidity with which a witty remark concerning what is going on will circulate through the theatre. Very amusing to listen to is some of the conversation that now goes on in little groups.

Close by us, for instance, is a clique of fashionable amateurs, and Lady Slasher is pointing out where some accomplished actress has missed an obvious point, whilst young Fitz-Stagey, the drawing-room comedian, explains the blunders of the "leading juvenile's" "business." Away in the passages and in the stuffy apartments called, on the *lucus à non lucendo* principle, "refreshment rooms," the buzz of animated talk is louder. It is here that coveted introductions are made, that old acquaintances are renewed, and that—occasionally—old quarrels are made up. In whichever direction we wander we shall come across something to interest those who are capable of deriving interest from a glimpse into some of the most intellectual society of the day, and even if we entered the theatre sceptical as to the fascination which first nights are supposed to possess, we are sure to leave it comprehending, if not precisely sharing, the taste here so strongly developed.

FRENCH ACTORS IN LONDON.

BY CHARLES F. PEMBERTON.

IN the summer of 1688 a curious letter was addressed to the Commissioners of Customs by the Lords of the Treasury. Some French comedians were coming over to act before the king, and it was desired "that the goods they brought with them in order to their acting might be delivered to them without paying any custom for the same." There is good reason to suppose that this was not the troupe which had been formed nine years previously by Louis XIV., and which in 1689 became officially known as the Comédie Française. The *Mercure Galant* of the day, as far as we can ascertain, makes no allusion to any visit of that company to a foreign country. Mdlle. Raisin, one of the most popular of the sociétaires, had appeared with great success before the Court of Charles II., and it is probable that that success induced some players not employed at the Comédie to pay London a professional visit.

How far the expectations of the players were realized we are not told, but it is a significant fact that more than thirty years elapsed before another troupe crossed the Channel. In 1749 the Comédie Française itself appeared in London, doubtless believing that, as a tendency to imitate the French drama had for some time been shown in England, their répertoire and their acting would ensure at least respectful attention. But it was not to be; the cry went abroad that it would be "unpatriotic" to even tolerate the

foreigners, and a determination to drive them away soon became apparent. Jean Mounet, the manager, has given in his *Mémoires* an account of what occurred on the first evening. The audience, as may be supposed, were dense, furious, and resolute. No sooner did the orchestra strike up than a thousand voices united in singing a song to the effect that French actors were not wanted there. An actor and an actress appeared to begin the piece; they were saluted with a shower of oranges and apples. One actress received on the chest a candle thrown at her by a drunken pittance. The uproar was deafening, but in a brief interval of silence a man of rank exclaimed, "If you do not care for the performance that is no reason why you should spoil the pleasure of those who do. I suppose your money will be returned to you if you leave." In reply he was told that a Comédie Française should never be established in London, and the tumult was renewed with a vigour which made it impossible to hear a word of the dialogue. It is more than probable that had it not been for the presence at the back of the stage of a company of soldiers some personal violence would have been offered to the players. Eventually, of course, the rioters triumphed; the company, like a few French actors who had come forward in 1720 and 1738, had to withdraw.

The remarks of the man of rank referred to are not without significance. The more lettered section of the community could take genuine pleasure in the French drama, as was to be seen when, thirty or more years afterwards, a French dentist's son, by name Joseph Francis Talma, gave performances at the Hanover Square Rooms of *Le Mariage de Figaro* and other comedies in the original, and when, about half-a-century after that, some plays in the same language were represented at what is now the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The general public, however, could not be convinced that to applaud French actors was an otherwise than unpatriotic proceeding. In 1848, M. Hippolyte Hostein, the manager of the Théâtre Historique, came over here to represent *La Reine Margot* at Drury Lane, the receipts of all places of entertainment in Paris having been materially reduced through the excitement induced by the Revolution of that year. The theatrical profession and the "patriots" were at once up in arms. The courtesies and favour with which Miss Helen Faucit and Macready had been received in Paris were seemingly forgotten. Mr. Charles Kean actually went so far as to request the Lord Chamberlain to interdict the intended performances, and before long a cabal was formed to prevent this and further attempts on the part of foreigners to interfere with native talent. The scene which followed the reopening of the theatre can hardly be described. The audience seemed beside

themselves with rage; they hurled missiles on the stage before the curtain rose, and the players were relentlessly hissed. "The row," said *The Times*, "was a stupid row, showing not only the illiberality of the rioters, but their paucity of invention. In the old O.-P. times there was some humour. A good joke now and then found its way into the uproar; but this was a long, dull, dismal display of nationality which was effective from the mere fact that it was wearisome. Two or three individuals in the pit thought it the height of humour to put up their umbrellas, but the police deemed it a still better joke to conduct these persons out of the house, which proceeding prevented a repetition of the pleasantry. Never did we see a number of persons so busy in attempting to degrade themselves in the eyes of all rational beings. We have reason to think that some of these zealots, worthy of better exploits than those of last night, were really persons of standing and respectability in the histrionic profession; and these, we are sure, when they rise this morning, will look with regret on the stupid scene of yesterday, and take especial care not to let their friends know they were concerned in such an exhibition." The players, on their side, would not bow to the storm. "Ils eurent la constance," says M. Hostein in his *Historiettes et Souvenirs d'un Homme de Théâtre*, "de réciter leurs rôles sans en omettre une phrase, au milieu de vociférations, de cris d'animaux et d'injures." In a few hours, however, they were on their way back to Paris, probably pitying us from the bottom of their hearts.

Well, *nous avons changé tout cela*. In the dark days of the Commune, when the Comédie Française came to London, they were received with unequivocal marks of sympathy and respect, and of the cordiality with which their present visit is hailed there can be no question. They are honoured in and out of the theatre, applauded, sought after, and caressed. But one or two theatres are doing as well as was the case a few weeks ago; even the opera-houses are comparatively deserted on the nights when Mdlle. Bernhardt appears. The foreigners are pointedly entertained by the Lord Mayor and others, made free of literary and dramatic clubs, and toasted at dinners. No welcome could be heartier than that accorded to them in London. The causes of the change lie on the surface; the playgoing public, educated by three or four critics of catholic tastes and wide reading, appreciate more or less the claims of the French stage in respect of both art and literature, and the "patriotic" hostility with which foreigners used to be regarded in London is to all intents and purposes a thing of the past. Nevertheless, the visit of the Comédie Française has not altogether failed to excite some professional

jealousy. Mr. Irving may take delight in meeting M. Got and M. Delaunay, but many of his brothers in art are of a different way of thinking. They speak of the French actors with undisguised bitterness and contempt, and it is said that a theatrical club of high position has neither extended to them the privilege of honorary membership nor indicated any consciousness of their existence. The fulsome praise lavished upon the Comédie in one or two papers has undoubtedly given rise to much irritation, but it is painful to think that the troupe should be treated with studied neglect by actors of high position.

JESTER GILBERT.

BY SERAPH.

FULL of a porcupinish wit that made his very quill hurt,
 You couldn't find a jester who could rival Jester Gilbert!
 Compared with him whose jokes were framed on topsy-turvy rules,
 Tom Taylor and the *Punch* brigade seemed very serious fools!

None irritated English like this fascinating rogue;
 His comic verses had a most extraordinary vogue;
 And no one laughed more heartily and was to him more loyal
 Than the good and genial Manager of the Theatre Royal!

"If, Jester Gilbert, you will turn your talents to the stage,
 You will be," quoth this Manager, "the wonder of your age!"
 "That will I be," cried Jester G., "if, to my author's rights,
 You'll add a guarantee each play shall run one hundred nights!"

"Hum! hum! Dear me! Queer guarantee!" "You hesitate?" "O,
 n—no!"

"Our bargain, then," said Gilbert, "like this drop of gin's—a go!"
 With "Right you are!" the Manager engaged him, it appears,
 To shoot at Folly in the flies for seven certain years!

As merrily as H. S. Leigh went Gilbert's opening pieces!
 Not so Frenchified as Farnie's, nor so rollicking as Reece's,
 His quaint burlesques and piquant puns, interpreted by syrens,
 Were acknowledged by the critics to be "'most as good as Byron's!"

But ah! there came a day when it was evident to all
 That Jester Gilbert no more jokes could summon at his call!
 He tried for them at intervals, and when they wouldn't come,
 Excused himself by stating he was under *Randall's Thumb*!

His *Charity* was feeble ; his *On Guard* fell flat and dead ;
Topsyturnvydom exhibited its author off his head ;
 And though his adaptations were by far the best of all,
 Yet *Wedding Marches* every night are very apt to pall !

Poor Gilbert grew quite anxious when *Pygmalion* didn't please,
 And his fairy tales were traced to French originals with ease ;
 He began to threaten law-suits and warn critics to desist—
 Which isn't what you look for in a public humorist !

At length things got to such a pitch and Gilbert such a fury,
 He dubbed this earth *A Wicked World* and sneered at *Trial by Jury* ;
 Rewrote his plays—rechristened them—insisted on fresh starts—
 Made mischief in *The Happy Land* and grinned at *Broken Hearts* !

Those *Creatures of Impulsive* mood, the *crutched* and *toothpicked* youth,
 Were puzzled by his *Sorcerer* and his *Palais de Truth* ;
 And, when they saw *A Vagabond*, indignantly exclaimed,
 " Why, demme, it's the same old play, but differently named ! "

Then came the genial Manager and said, " Dear Gilbert, you
 Have clearly undertaken rather more than you can do ;
 This agreement (which I'll cancel) is to you (and me) a bore—
 Go ! go and be a boy again, and wear a *Pinafore* ! "

Quoth Gilbert : " Such a taunt was never—hardly ever—heard !
 A bargain is a bargain ; I'm a jester of my word !
 That old impostor Shakspeare, he has often furnished you
 One hundred nights of merriment—and I will do it, too ! "

He struggled lamely on and racked his twice-exhausted brain,
 And very bad indeed were his attempts to entertain ;
 He lost his French refinement and his quick adaptive taste,
 And sued folks for asserting that his pieces were not chaste !

The Manager said little, for his heart was good and kind ;
 And the critics they pretended that they really didn't mind ;
 But still behind the curtain there were endless feuds and fights,
 And it grew to be impossible to run one hundred nights !

The Manager, he dreaded litigation (he was weak),
 And offered Gilbert extra terms—a benefit—bespeak—
 The gross receipts for six last nights—or anything, in short ;
 But Gilbert steadfastly declined—declining was his forte !

For Jester G., though dull, was proud, and scorned to be forgot :
 " My contract's for one hundred nights—is it or is it not ?
 If you have rights, why so have I, and know what I am about !
 And I must insist on ruin till the hundred nights are out ? "

To him, the genial Manager : " I've borne with you too long !
 Your pieces are too weak, except when they are much too strong !
 Be off ! Go to the Devil, grinning Jester, with your plays—"
 " Hold ! An idea ! " cried Jester G., " List to my final craze !

"You send me to the Evil One ! I go ! That makes my game !
We'll take old Faust and Marguerite, add new words to the same,
And raise the Devil in five acts ! We'll call it, if you please,
The *Catastrophic Gretchen*, or *Lopped Mephistopheles* !

"We'll make Faustus out a Curate, and have some High Church fun !
Show how Siebel and Valentine have Gott-fried into one !
Explain how Gretchen—naughty girl !—left Faustus in the lurch,
'Cause he refused at Eastertide to decorate his church !

"She'll have a cough, just like Camille, and when the Tempter taunts,
She shall go live with her sisters, and her cousins, and her aunts !
Then the Devil shall become—Ha ! Ha !—a Bishop—ain't that grand ?"
"I object !" cried Mephistopheles, invisibly at hand !

* * * * *

The piece was written and produced, with topsyturvies crammed ;
But it had no novel ending : all concerned were duly damned
In the good, old-fashioned, first-night, customary British way—
And Jester Gilbert went unto the Devil, with his play !

REMINISCENCES.

BY EDWARD COMPTON.

I SAW her in a theatre, in a province in our isle,
In a pretty fairy costume in the pantomimic style ;
I watched her in her acting, I encored her in her dance,
I applauded in her singing, and I loved her in a glance !

I passed her in the "second grooves," I met her in a "wing,"
I got to know her in a "wait," and missed her in a "fling ;"
I caught her in the "prompter's box," she vanished in a "trap,"
I thought of her in day, in night, and saw her in my nap.

I put her in her cab at nights, I drew her in a stall,
I poetised her in the *Mail*, I saved her in a fall ;
I told my love in verses, I threw them her in flow'rs,
I asked her to be mine in life, and merge her name in ours.

She whispered "Yes," in answer, in a pretty "half-aside ;"
We married in a fortnight in a church they call St. Bride,
We honeymooned in Paris, we've settled down in life,
Our boys are "in the city," and our girl's a happy wife !

Portraits.

XXIV.—MR. VERNON.

THE style of the late Charles Mathews was peculiar to himself, but there can be no doubt that if he is to have an immediate successor his mantle has fallen upon the shoulders of the subject of the present sketch. Mr. Vernon, it seems to us, is the most finished light comedian we possess. His acting in this *emploi* is infectious in its gaiety and briskness, and when he has a share in a witty and epigrammatic dialogue he proves the most formidable rival Mr. Byron has yet encountered. His talents, however, are not confined to one walk of art. He excels in characters to which Mathews could not have done justice. In some respects Sir Geoffry Heriot bears a superficial resemblance to Mr. Affable Hawk, but the evergreen comedian could hardly have found a congenial atmosphere in the graver scenes of *Mammon*, any more than he could have given adequate expression to the sullen and deep-seated enmity of Lord Charles Spencer towards his Jacobite brother-in-law. Mr. Vernon, in fact, is an actor of varied gifts and attainments, and it will be a pleasant task to trace the steps by which he rose to the position he now occupies. He passed most of his novitiate at the Bristol Theatre, then under the management of Mr. Chute. Many other players who have achieved distinction in their profession appeared there in early life—Miss Kate Terry, Miss Ellen Terry, Mrs. Kendal, Mrs. Bancroft, Miss Hodson, and Mr. Arthur Stirling. Mr. Vernon here played many parts, from Hamlet and Romeo down to Jeremy Diddler and other heroes of farce. At one occasion, sad to relate, he appeared in a pantomime as a vampire, and was warmly congratulated by the *Bath Express* on the excellence with which he “looked and played the double character of man and demon.” His highest achievement, perhaps, was as the Man in the Iron Mask, a character which, comprising as it does the life of the unhappy captive from the bright dawn of manhood to premature old age, demands great variety of expression. During his probation in the country Mr. Vernon more than once found himself in the same company as Mr. Irving, and a lasting friendship sprang up between them. In the autumn of 1868 an object which he had steadily kept in view was at length



THE THEATRE, NO. 10, NEW SERIES.

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Very truly yours
W. W. W. W.

attained. Mr. Byron engaged him to play the chief part in *Cyril's Success* at the Globe Theatre. Before leaving Bristol he was presented by some of the citizens with a gold watch, and by his fellow players with a chain and locket. The watch was accompanied by an address on vellum, recording the esteem in which the donors held him both on and off the stage. The good wishes that came with him to London were amply realized. His success was unequivocal, and from that time to the present he has been almost constantly before the playgoing public. His Lord Charles Spencer in *Clancarty* marks one of the steps in his career; indeed, the author, who is proverbially hard to please, found no fault during the rehearsals with the performance. It is with the Strand Theatre that Mr. Vernon has been principally associated in London. Here, it will be remembered, he has played in, among other pieces, *Old Soldiers*, *Old Sailors*, *Weak Woman*, and *A Lesson in Love*. "It would be impossible," as an acute critic has remarked, "to find a better instance of the comic style of Mr. Vernon than his playing in the third act of this last piece. The almost tragic agony with which his wavering mind debates the question whether or not it will be judicious to present the object of his affections with the copy of the *Cornhill* tucked under his arm, the convulsions of feeling with which he first proffers and then withdraws the orange-coloured offering, and the terrible state of mental confusion into which the distracted lover gradually works himself,—present an example of pure comedy of a very high and admirable order. If anybody doubts the popularity of such a thing as 'comic force' let him take the earliest opportunity of seeing Mr. Vernon in this scene. The contemporary stage affords no better proof of how much more enjoyable are the artistic touches of the high comedian than the broader and more obvious resources of the low." But it is as Sir Geoffry Heriot in *Mammon* that Mr. Vernon is now best known. His embodiment of this character amounted to a sort of revelation. Hitherto he had been known in London chiefly as a vivacious light comedian; his Sir Geoffry showed force of character and strength of sentiment. "Mr. Vernon," said one of the critics, "is clearly endowed with talents of the highest order. His comprehension of the character of the daring and unprincipled speculator is masterly, and his impersonation was fully equal to his comprehension. In several passages, notably at the close of the second act, where he is abandoned by his wife, and worse blow of all, deserted by his beloved child, and sits staring in almost imbecile bewilderment under the stroke, the genius of the actor was not only unquestionable, but suggested a range of power and passion too rarely seen on our stage."

Fenilleton.

THE QUEEN OF THE VILLAGE.

BY LORD DESART.

I.

YES, sir, I will comply with your request, chiefly because of the kindness you have shown me since I became an inmate of the gaol under your reverend care; but also because, as you have said, any occupation other than thinking will be a boon to me during the few days I have yet to live. I am to die on Tuesday, and this is Thursday; only four more days to eat my heart out here in vain regrets; and then—Oh, sir! if what I have always believed of Him be true, then at last I shall be happy. I have sinned in the sight of man deeply; I am not to be forgiven here, and I acknowledge the justice of my sentence; but my principal sin is only that I raised up on earth an idol of clay to worship, and it has fallen and crushed me to powder!

I forget when it was that I first loved her. It seems, indeed, to me that I have never lived till that day. And yet it was none of that love at first sight of which we read. I watched her emerge from childhood to the glorious beauty of her girlhood gradually, imperceptibly, and it was by slow degrees that I began to perceive that I was no longer only her playmate and companion of her leisure hours, but also her lover.

She was the daughter of the large farmer whose land ran up to the outskirts of the village of Mexton,* and who, next of course to Sir Henry Sarlemere, of Mexton Hall, and the rector, was the principal person in our community. Even Mr. Grainge, the manager of the branch bank, where I was placed in my seventeenth year as clerk with strong hopes of rising, was not so great a man as Mr. Corcoran.

Of course it savoured rather of presumption in me, the son of a farmer many degrees lower in the social scale (for we had a social scale even at Mexton) than Mr. Corcoran, to aspire to his daughter; but I was too young and too much in love to think of such things; and, after all, I was as good in every way as my rival James Howell, the son of our principal shopkeeper, who did not conceal his intention of winning her if possible.

Mettie was patrician to the ends of her dainty little fingers: refined and ladylike in every word and every gesture. Of course she was well educated, and probably knew as much, if not more, than any young lady who had her highly-salaried governess in any of the big Squires' houses. And her beauty—no writer could describe it, I don't believe any painter could portray it. She was fair, with the bloom of peach upon her cheek, with laughing tender eyes, with a rosebud mouth that had nearly always a petulant little pout on it, with sunny locks framing the smallest and most perfectly-shaped head. No wonder she was the queen of our little society.

An uneasy feeling often came over me that she was something too refined for such as I; but as old Corcoran had very decided ideas about people keeping in their own stations, I was never troubled by the intrusion of any of the smart young gentlemen who gazed at her with wondering admiration on the road as they went out hunting or returned therefrom. He would have been a bold man indeed, let him be a Duke or a Marquis, who would have forced his way into the Crown Farm against the owner's will.

It was after a little party at the house of Jim Howell's employer, where we had danced and otherwise amused ourselves, that I first spoke to Mettie of the love that had "grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength," until I could keep silence no longer. Of course I knew well enough that she was aware of it, and had been for some time; and lately an advancement in my salary, and the gift from my father of a little house just outside the village, in lieu of the lodging I had hitherto occupied, emboldened me to speak. She heard me very quietly. We were walking along the road to the Crown Farm, under the stars; and when I had finished my enthusiastic speech she said:—

"Oh, Aleck, dear—but—how are we to live?"

"I have a house now, and——"

"Oh, that would never do for me!" she cried, her lips pouting. "I want to get away from Mexton, and see the world. If—if I were ever to say 'Yes' to you, you silly boy, it would be only on condition that we went away to London or somewhere. I am sick of this place and its dullness."

"But, Mettie——"

"Oh, don't bring in any 'buts;' I don't allow them, sir. Why, even Jim Howell is going. There won't be a man within a hundred miles under fifty years old soon!"

"Jim Howell, going!" I exclaimed.

"Yes; haven't you heard? He's got something in London, and they say he is sure to do well."

"Oh, of course," I said sarcastically. "Of course, in *your* opinion, Jim Howell is sure to get on."

"And why not," she returned, looking at me with fun in her blue eyes. "He's a very nice young man, and very clever. *He* is not going to be content to stay and know nothing of the world all his life. Why one might as well be down a well."

After some more conversation of this kind we reached the Crown Farm, and I went home with the sweet recollection of a kiss, and with no distinct knowledge whether she had accepted me or not. However, I took the bull by the horns, and went next day to see Mr. Corcoran, and told him my whole story.

"Yes, my boy, yes," said he, patting me on the shoulder. "Of course I saw there was something of this sort going on, and I frankly tell you I am glad of it. I like you, and there was someone else running after her whom I did *not* like."

"You mean Jim Howell, sir?"

"No matter whom I mean. So she said yes, did she?"

"Well," I hesitated, "not exactly. She seemed to make a sort of condition of our not living at Mexton."

"Whew! So the little puss is tired of us all. Well, well," he said, rather sadly I thought, "it's quite natural. What is calm happiness to us old folks is stagnation to the young ones. And we are apt to forget that a little trouble is necessary to make us enjoy quiet. So she wants to go and find her trouble, does she, and to take you to find it with her. What do they give you at the bank?"

I told him exactly what my position and prospects were, and he sent me away, promising to think it over. In a few days he sent for me again, and told me that he had found Mettie more obstinate than he had expected. Her firm idea was to "see the world," and he thought, perhaps, that she might settle down quietly afterwards if she were allowed to a certain extent her wish.

"So I have arranged with the partners in the Blankshire Bank at Waterby to take you, and the manager here is so enthusiastic in your praise that I am glad to say you will be in a very different position now as to salary. I will give Mettie £150 a year, and if you two young people think you can rub along comfortably on that, and are quite sure you are really fond of one another, well, you may go and get married as soon as you please."

Mettie had come into the room—looking lovely in her bashfulness—while he spoke, and he took hold of her hand and drew her towards him.

"Are you sure, Mettie?" I asked, almost too much agitated to get the words out.

"Are you, Aleck?" she said, looking shyly up at me.

"Sure. You know I am sure."

"Then so am I, father."

He kissed her cheek.

"There then; I'm glad that's settled. He'll make you a good husband, my child. I have watched him from childhood. Do you make him a good wife. A little less wilfulness and selfishness, Mettie, now we are a woman."

She pouted rather angrily, and snatched her hands away from him with a pettish gesture.

He looked at her rather gravely for a moment, and then saying, "Now, children, I'll leave you to talk it over a bit," left us together.

II.

WATERBY was the principal town of our county, and Mettie allowed that a certain amount of "the world" might be seen there; and that, at any rate, she would be satisfied with it as a beginning. She was very much absorbed in and interested by preparations for the wedding, and I certainly did not see much more of her after our engagement than before. But she was to be *mine*—my own—to love and to cherish! Oh, what a blessed thought that was, and how often I vowed to myself to shield her always from harm, and to love her with all my heart!

We were married at last, and drove off at once to take possession of our little house—taken and furnished by Mr. Corcoran—in the town of Waterby. Mettie, who had scarcely ever been away from home, was delighted with the bustle of the streets, the noise, the carriages, and the lights.

It soon became her habit to accompany me to the bank every morning; and in the evening she met me close by, and we took a ramble together before going home to dinner. Of course I knew it was a dull life for her; but what could I do? It was the life of the wives of all in my position; and her extra beauty and charms could not cause it to differ from them. Thinking over these things, after perhaps seeing the traces of tears upon her cheeks, I sometimes wondered how I could have dared to undertake the charge of this beautiful, fragile creature. But then I loved her so! It was perhaps six months after our marriage that, coming out of the bank one evening as usual, I found my wife waiting for me, and in conversation with a tall, well-dressed young fellow, whom I did not recognise as Jim Howell until I came close up. He greeted me most effusively, told me that he had come for a few weeks to make inquiries as to a business here that his London employers were thinking of buying; and he was full of self-congratulation at meeting us.

"I should have been bored to death in this musty town else," he cried, and as he spoke I remarked how much he had altered for the better, in appearance, at least; how well his clothes fitted him, and how fiercely the ends of his moustache were turned up.

"'Musty town,' indeed, Jim!" said Mettie, with mock reproach. "I assure you we think it uncommonly fashionable and gay—don't we, Aleck?"

I didn't like the bantering tone she assumed as she asked me this, and I am afraid I replied rather gruffly.

"Oh, you must get him to change to London soon, my dear Mrs. Toynbey. There's no place like London. You *live* there; here and in such places you only exist."

"Nonsense, Jim!" I said. "This is a charming town; far pleasanter than your overgrown, smoky London."

"There was a fox once that saw some grapes hanging above him," began Jim; and then he went on to tell us such tales of his amusements in the capital, of theatres and other gaieties, as made my little wife's eyes glisten.

Then of course we took him home with us to dinner, and there was more of this until he went away; and Mettie, turning pettishly to me, exclaimed, "I am only just beginning to realise what life ought to be, and what my life *is*!"

III.

How was it that the dreadful truth took so long in becoming clear to me? Our neighbours all saw it. I verily believe even the clerks in the bank knew it long before I did—I, to whom its knowledge meant death, and worse than death.

It is so easy to be wise after the event; but surely I ought to have guessed at the reason of her altered manner, of her strange fits of silence, her causeless tears, her occasional outbursts of equally causeless petulance with me, who loved her. And all this while Jim Howell stayed on at Waterby, and made himself so agreeable that I liked him far better than I had ever done at Mexton. He had much leisure to himself; indeed, I never quite made out what his business was, and am inclined to believe that he was in reality spending a holiday there; and I was only too glad that he should amuse Mettie, take her out walking, and otherwise relieve the monotony of her life. I had such perfect faith in her that I would have trusted her with anyone, and Jim Howell was, like myself, an old playmate, and therefore more or less privileged as regarded her. He had soon dropped the formal "Mrs. Toynbey," with which he at first greeted her, and they were Jim and Mettie to each other as of old.

At last my eyes were opened—of course by a woman. I need not waste my time by describing her. She was by way of being a beauty, and so was jealous of Mettie, and she had the cunning not to say a word until the proofs were certain—damning.

Nearly mad with rage and sorrow I confronted them next day. I had obtained permission to leave my desk an hour earlier than usual, and I found them together in my house, that had been *our home*. They were too much surprised to deny anything. Silently, and hand in hand—hand in hand! it maddened me to see it—they stood and listened to my rage. Once when I stepped forward with outstretched hand to strike him to the ground, she threw herself between us. And I was powerless. Lucky for them at that moment that my sorrow was even greater than my rage; that I thought more of my lost love than my outraged honour. I let them go—together—and I sat down in my empty room—that room which I had furnished as prettily as my means would allow, in which everything had some tender reminiscence connected with it—in mute despair, my heart broken for ever!

IV.

They said I had a brain fever—doctors know nothing of broken hearts, for there is no physic for such things—and a narrow escape of my life. Even our clerks pitied me when I came back to my work, aged in appearance, I was told, by many years. They knew nothing of my shame. Was it not hers also? I could not speak of it, and the domestic affairs of a man in my position are not very interesting to others. It was not the interest of the weekly papers to make “copy” of my grief, as I am told is done with regard to such affairs in the upper circles of society. Probably it was supposed that my wife had gone to see her friends. Once or twice—against my will, as it were—I walked down the street in which Howell had lived, I mustered up courage to ask whether he had left, and found that he had done so on that very night.

One day I was told that a delicate mission was to be accomplished in London, and that I had been selected for its performance.

I was neither glad nor sorry—I was never either now—and departed for the great city. There I saw her twice—once she was walking along the street hanging on his arm, and laughing at something he was saying to her; and once she drove past alone in a cab. Then there was an interval, which seemed interminable to me, and then I saw her again. It was at night, when the lamps were lighted, and I was wandering aimlessly about, as was my

custom, to escape the fearful misery of sitting alone with my thoughts in my lodging. I was passing the door of a restaurant in the Strand, when a brougham dashed up and stopped close to me.

I looked round, and saw her get out, accompanied by a man dressed in evening clothes. I stood rooted to the ground, my eyes fixed upon her face, which was flushed by excitement.

"Come along, Mettie!" said he. "When shall we have the brougham?"

"Oh, at eleven, Harry. He won't be back till late."

"Eleven, John," said the man, and they passed in.

I had been so taken up with gazing upon her lovely face that it was only afterwards I remembered she was dressed as I had never seen her before, and that jewels sparkled on her head and neck.

v.

She must be saved, I said to myself; at all risks she must be saved. But how? For an hour I paced the streets thinking. The feeling that there was something to be done made a man of me again, and I felt equal to anything for her sake. Have you guessed my secret, sir? I loved her fiercely, madly, still; she was still, even now after what I knew, all in all to me—hope and life!

Next day I set to work to find out where she and Howell lived, and by a happy accident I succeeded in tracing him home one evening. Then I waited about, determined to speak with her alone. The opportunity came. Resplendent in silk and lace she drove up in a cab. As she was about to put her latch-key in the door I emerged from the shadow, and called her by name. She started, and turned to me:—

"You!"

"Yes, Mettie, I! The man you outraged, whose home you have made desolate. But I do not come to reproach you—I come to warn."

She had recovered her composure now, but I could see under the gas-lamp that she was very pale.

"Warn me! What of?"

"Of the consequences of your present life."

She laughed a hard, unreal laugh, so unlike the silvery peal I remembered.

"Is that all?"

"No, it is not all. You *shall* no longer lead it!"

"*Shall*? Who will stop me?"

"Who? Your—— The man you live with here."

"Jim! Bah! He knows all about it!"

"It cannot be!" I cried; but she only laughed again—a laugh that made my blood run cold, and, opening the door, entered the house and slammed it in my face.

I scarcely knew how long I stood there, till I was roused from my stupefaction by another cab driving up, out of which got James Howell. He was accompanied by a showily-dressed woman, who, after some joking remarks between them, drove away.

What need to recapitulate the words that passed between us? I told all at my trial. He was excited by wine, and I—I was drunk with rage and horror. It was all true—he never denied it—he was living on the proceeds of her shame. And should he escape—not the justice of the law, for there was no law to punish him, but the justice of humanity? When I took him by the throat I felt no desire for vengeance, I swear it. I felt that I was only executing Heaven's decree. Such a wretch should not live. He was the more powerful of the two, but I seemed gifted then with the strength of twenty men. How long he took to die—how horrible his eyes looked, almost leaping out of his head as I strangled him! At last it was all over. I had done justice, and—I was a murderer!

You have taught me since, sir, that my deed was a foul one; that man should never take upon himself the execution of even so just a vengeance as this; and I admit the propriety of my sentence. A felon's death—it is horrible—though death itself is sweet. I cannot cant or whine, but I do repent my deed—all the more as it availed nothing to save *her*. Oh, sir, for pity's sake trace her out, and tell her that a dying man has forgiven her the wrong she did to him, and prays her for the sake of her soul to turn back again to innocence!

NOTE BY THE CHAPLAIN.

THE convict, Alexander Toynbey, received a reprieve two days before the time fixed for execution, his sentence being eventually commuted to penal servitude for life. He died, however, less than three weeks afterwards. I traced out the wretched woman who was the cause of his guilt, and contrived to speak to her and give her his message; but it was to no purpose. I am told that she is now what is called one of the "*queens of the demi-monde*," and that her photograph may be seen in the shop windows.

En Passant.

ONE night last month Mdme. Taglioni might have been seen in a box at the Lyceum Theatre. The performance over, she sent a little note to the representative of Claude Melnotte, complimenting him very warmly upon his performance. "A few days ago," writes a correspondent, "I met this charming lady, once the first dancer in the world, at the house of a friend. I recalled to her mind the summer of 1847, when she was dancing in the opera-house of Munich. This brought forth a flood of interesting anecdotes of King Louis and of Lola Montez. For example: a certain noble officer, seeing Lola's portrait in the Glyptothek, and thinking it must be the likeness of some fair aristocrat, inquired of a very aristocratic friend, "*Wie ist sie geboren?*" "What is her birth?" literally, "How was she born?" The reply was, "*Sie ist nie geboren.*" "She never was born;" i.e., is nobody. Very pleasant it was to recall the great night at the Haymarket, in July, 1848. There, in *Don Pasquale*, I heard La Blanche, Mario and Grisi, and immediately after saw in the *pas de quatre* Mme. Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi, Lucile Grahn and Rosati. "And you remember that," remarked Mme. Taglioni. "Yes, I saw the greatest ballet the world ever witnessed." And it was so indeed. After many years the memory of that evening comes like the recollection of a dream of fairy-land.

At the instance of M. Jules Ferry, the French Cabinet are about to consider whether M. Got and M. Delaunay shall not be decorated with the Legion of Honour. Down to the present time no actor has enjoyed the distinction until after his withdrawal from the stage. It is urged that as he is likely to be ignominiously treated in a play the dignity of the ribbon would suffer. But the arguments in favour of conferring the honour are more numerous. Not to speak of other great names, Æschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes, Shakspeare, and Molière fretted and strutted their hour upon the stage as Sophocles would have done but for want of chest-power. The stage has added three saints to the calendar, the bar only one. No profession has had so few votaries among offenders against the law as the theatrical. Decide as the French Cabinet may as to whether the Legion of Honour shall or shall not be conferred at once upon M. Got and M. Delaunay, it is certain that the importance and dignity of histrionic art are gradually winning recognition. Formerly actors were deemed *infâme* and often buried in unconsecrated ground; now, at least, they may sit in the Chamber.

READERS of "Pendennis" may recollect how, when the London manager came down to the little Chatteris Theatre, all the company played dead at the great man, every sigh, every joke, every burst of passion was aimed at his box. In like manner do many members of the Comédie Française

address their efforts to the particular edification of M. Francisque Sarcey, as was especially noticeable during the afternoon performance of *Tartuffe*, when the Dorine, with a proper contempt for an audience of foreigners, was obviously making every point at the one spectator who could appreciate her efforts (and had the power to condemn them !)

THE Prime Minister's *Alarcos* was played at the Crystal Palace, though not for the first time on any stage. On the night of Saturday, August 1st, 1868, Astley's was re-opened, after a long interval, under the direction of Miss Agnes Cameron, from the United States, and then was produced the play published by Colborn in 1839. The Spanish ballad "Conde Alarcos," on which it is founded, belongs to the thirteenth century, and the same subject supplied Lord John Russell seventeen years before with a theme for his tragedy of *Don Carlos*, eventually produced at the Olympic in 1846. At Astley's the tragedy was not a success. The text had not been committed to memory, and each performer evolved out of his own consciousness a cloud of images which took the most fantastic shapes, while the blank verse was delivered to the audience in every variety of measure.

THE Rev. Mr. Headlam, the uncompromising champion of music-halls, has started a "Church and Stage Guild," in order to "promote religious and social sympathy between the members of the Church and the Stage, to hold meetings for these purposes from time to time, and to meet for worship at least once a year." The committee, in a statement which they have issued, say "the stage has not always met with the charity which it has taught and shown. The members of the clergy, therefore, with whom the idea of this Guild originated, utterly repudiate all notion of patronage. They ask for mutual help and mutual forbearance, and believe that by God's help and blessing a good work may be done from small beginnings if they can bring more closely together those who love the faith and love the stage, which was among the earliest teachers of that faith through the miracle plays." The general committee include such names as Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. Warner, Miss Geneviève Ward, and Miss Rose Leclercq.

MR. IRVING and M. Delaunay, Mr. Moy Thomas tells us in one of those ever-welcome columns of dramatic gossip in the *Daily News*, met for the first time a week or two ago at a little gathering at the house of a friend. Witnessing the French actor's performance of Celio in *Les Caprices de Marianne* at our Opéra Comique Theatre, Mr. Irving exclaimed to a friend, "What a Romeo he would make !" M. Delaunay now recited in his most finished style the exquisitely tender ballad of Fortunio. Unfortunately, his want of familiarity with our language, as spoken, must have prevented his full appreciation of Mr. Irving's response, which took the form of a recital of Hood's *Dream of Eugene Aram* ; but some idea of the poem had been conveyed to him, and Mr. Irving's picturesque display of passion and fleeting shades of expression of features were watched by the actor with a manifestly strong interest.

WE are in a position to state that the stories as to a quarrel between Mdlle. Bernhardt and M. Perrin are in a great measure devoid of truth.

The actress, in order to extend her reputation and put money in her purse, announced that she was prepared to play short pieces or recite poems in drawing-rooms. M. Perrin objected to her doing so, saying that if persons saw her in private they might keep away from the theatre, and that consequently Mr. Hollingshead's interests would suffer. But on its being pointed out to him that the greatest prime-donne sang in drawing-rooms he waived his objections, as was to be expected. The "scenes" alleged to have occurred between him and the actress existed only in imagination.

It was at Mrs. Schuster's that Mdle. Bernhardt made her first appearance in a London drawing-room. The piece she selected was one called *Le Pari d'une Grande Dame*, which gave her an opportunity of simulating various emotions and of modelling a bust at a few minutes' notice. The exhibition was too obtrusively theatrical in its character, and taken in conjunction with the fact that she received an honorarium (one hundred guineas) was not worthy of a great actress. In this country, as Mr. Moy Thomas points out, it is certainly not the custom either for actresses or actors of distinguished position to offer their talents for private hire, nor are they as a rule seen to appear in the drawing-rooms of "high society" except in the quality of honoured guests.

MDLE. BERNHARDT's paintings and sculptures are now to be seen in the gallery opposite St. James's Church, Piccadilly. The company at the private view included Mr. Gladstone, Madame Christine Nilsson, Sir Frederick Leighton, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Walter, Sir George Dasent, Mr. Tom Taylor, Mr. Theodore Martin, Sir Julius Benedict, Mr. Millais, Mr. Sala, Mr. Yates, Mr. Clement Scott, Mr. Hare, Mr. and Mrs. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. J. W. Davison, Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. Frederick Hawkins, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. Edward Rose, and Lord Desart. The hostess wore a plain black dress and Leghorn hat, with a bunch of roses near her neck, and carried a malacca cane. Her paintings show that if she had the leisure and will to go through the drudgery of art she would handle the brush to good purpose; her sculpture, especially the bust of Emile de Girardin and the reduction of "*Après la Tempête*," displays high skill.

MISS DAVENPORT was lately interviewed at San Francisco. "British acting," she said, "has no action, no animation, no life, no magnetism, no verve. The actors aim at repose, and the result is stolidity. There is, however, one living, moving, breathing British actor, whose virtues atone for a thousand histrionic sinners. I allude to Henry Irving. He is a strange-looking man, and is as strangely dressed. When he called upon me he was wearing a snuff-coloured velvet coat. On the stage he is simply splendid. He has the most bewitching smile I ever saw. It not only illuminates his face, but appears to light up even the whole of a sad-coloured British stage. His Hamlet is the only real live flesh-and-blood Hamlet I ever saw. He is not bound by the traditions of the stage, either in his action or reading of it. I never saw my father play Hamlet, and I have been told by those who have seen him, when I gush about Irving,

that I ought to have, but none the less I continue to gush. And I like Marie Seebach, although I am sorry to say she was not appreciated in America other than by her own country-people."

THREE deaths have to be chronicled. The first is that of Mrs. Howard Paul, which occurred early in June. In 1853 she appeared at the Strand Theatre, and in 1855 married Mr. Howard Paul. For some time she took part in his entertainments, but eventually returned to the stage. Her last original part was Lady Sangazure in the *Sorcerer*. Mrs. Paul was an extremely versatile and pleasing actress and singer. Mr. Charles Calvert died in an asylum at Hammersmith soon afterwards. Educated at King's College, he turned actor as a consequence of frequenting Sadler's Wells, and as years passed on signalized himself by getting up some striking Shakspearean revivals. Mr. Craven Robertson, manager of the *Caste* company, brother of the late Mr. T. W. Robertson and Mrs. Kendal, succumbed to a short illness on the 23rd June.

THOSE who like nothing better than a genuine novelty will do well to purchase a pamphlet called *A Throw for a Throne*. The author, a friend of Madame Nilsson's, is of opinion that Hamlet is a murderer, a liar, a thief, a brigand, and a forger. Nor is this all; Claudius is full of "sacred emotions" and "humbleness of spirit," and, after "behaving towards the prince with tender and wise solicitude," "delegates his judicial office" to the weapon of "the injured son and brother Laertes." Less novel, we fear, but scarcely less noteworthy, is the author's style. In one place he speaks of, "Th' eternal shrinking spirit, far midst writhing filmy forms, that tumult in that sea of foul despondence and of woe, thick, seething up in oaths to lurid zones of uncommiserating, neverlessening gloom."

ONE night in May a lively scene occurred in a performance of *L'Assommoir* at the Olympic Theatre, New York. Miss Granger, the representative of Gervaise, had for some time been on bad terms with Miss Rigl, the representative of Virginie, and on this occasion took advantage of the workhouse scene to vent her spite against her. Instead of dashing the water on Miss Rigl's bosom and hips, as before, Miss Granger hurled the bucketful with all her might direct into her face. The audience shouted and applauded loudly. It was gloriously funny, and, as they supposed, all in the play. Instantly—that is, as soon as she had recovered—Miss Rigl took up her pail of soapsuds and strided across the stage after Miss Granger. The latter caught up her skirts and started to run. Miss Rigl increased her speed, overtook Gervaise, and drenched her from head to foot with the water. Then the matter became more serious; they pulled each other's hair, scratched each other's face, tore each other's clothes, called each other names, and would perhaps have seriously injured each other if they had been permitted to have their own way. The curtain was rung down; carpenters and scene-shifters rushed upon the stage, and the belligerents were separated. Expostulated with by the manager, the ladies promised to fight no more, and the curtain was rung up again.

At the Play.

IN LONDON.

SO much is crowded into the short month during which the Comédie Française has been nightly acting at the Gaiety Theatre, that it would be a hopeless task to follow their career in detail within the limits at our disposal. We doubt, moreover, whether such a course would be wholly desirable, even were it practicable. Thanks partly to the fashion of the moment, partly to a peculiarly English prejudice in favour of foreign art, and partly to the interest which a novelty naturally commands in the world of journalism, these performances have been received day after day with columns of report in our principal daily papers, which, if not very sound or very subtle in their criticism, make up for their weakness in this direction by their strength in the history of the plays produced and their enthusiastic belief in all the efforts of the admirable artists now amongst us. Under these circumstances it does not seem advisable to do more than take a bird's-eye view of the earlier half of the Gaiety season, noting its more remarkable features and striving to catch the general impression which these representations have left behind them.

The experiment inaugurated at the Gaiety on the 2nd June was no complete novelty, but its leading merit was amply sufficient to distinguish it from all its precursors. It was no small thing to know that the group of actors and actresses assembled on the stage, while M. Got as *doyen* spoke the prologue *Molière à Shakspeare*, written by M. Jean Aicard, included all the sociétaires of the most famous company of Paris, and therefore of Europe. Here was a guarantee that there would be nothing of a "scratch" character in the casts of any of the forty plays to be presented, and that, for good or for evil, the outcome of the system of the Comédie Française would be fully displayed as it has never before been displayed out of the French capital. Interesting as was M. Got's recital of M. Aicard's ambitious address, it is not too much to say that the attention of the houseful of celebrities was fixed chiefly upon the fragile, graceful, and earnest woman who, in a picturesque if somewhat affected attitude, fixed her luminous gaze upon the bust of Shakspeare. This was Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt, whose performance of *Phèdre* was afterwards to electrify an audience already, if the truth be told, rather wearied by the ponderous satire of *Le Misanthrope*. Leaving for a moment Mdlle. Bernhardt, destined though she was to become the popular idol of the Gaiety playgoers, we have to express a conviction that when the performance of classical works such as Molière's *Le Misanthrope*, Voltaire's *Zaïre*, Corneille's *Le Menteur*, and Racine's *Les Plaideurs* comes to be analyzed it will be found to contain many of the faults which we are accustomed to decry in

our performers when they deal with the dramatic poetry of days gone by. In saying this we would not be understood to under-rate the general value of the tradition which has handed down in the Maison de Molière this conventional manner amongst many admirable habits of elocution. We only point out that the custom of descending to the footlights and addressing long speeches to the audience, of deliberately avoiding any approach to nature in the arrangement of the scene, and of adopting an artificial method of carriage and speech, has its manifest disadvantages as well as its advantages; and we call to mind that it is upon these disadvantages that we are accustomed to dwell when commenting nowadays upon our more conventional revivals of 17th and 18th century works. *Le Misanthrope* was not happily chosen—except as a tribute to the invaluable influence of its author—as the introductory play of the series, for M. Delaunay's *Alceste* is not the best that could be imagined, and it displays none of that characteristic charm of his style discoverable in his *Dorante*, his *Octave*, and many of his other impersonations. The highest art of the performance was centred in the *Arsinoë* of Mme. Favart, who outplayed the very ordinary *Célimène* of Mdlle. Croizette, striking only in its magnificent outward adornment. The second act of *Phèdre*, which, scarcely in accordance with the reverence due from this company to Racine, was allowed to be given as an extract, at once placed Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt upon a pedestal from which she will not soon be overthrown unless by her own mistakes. Her fire, always feminine, and her passion, always womanly, at once secured for her the position which is hers by the divine right of genius.

While speaking of Mdlle. Bernhardt in her all-conquering presentation of this most terrible and repulsive scene, it may be convenient to trace briefly the other steps by which she has won her way to the hearts of her English hearers; and we may remark *en passant* that though the actress is doubtless to blame for violating the spirit if not the laws of the Comédie Française by posing in various ways apart from her comrades, it is in the last degree illogical to find fault with her as some English critics have done for taking the position at the Gaiety of a "star" actress. This reputation is accorded to her by a public which, having discovered that she fascinates it by her personal power, runs after her whenever she plays, in order to make the most of the passing opportunity of delightful thralldom. As Mrs. Clarkson, in that strange play *L'Etrangère*, the actress astonished us by a completely new phase of her skill as she suggested the complex motives which inspire the vengeful quadron in her civilized warfare against mankind. Again, in that unpleasant and feeble work, *Le Sphinx*, she made much of the very commonplace character of a wife deeply injured by one who professes to be her friend, and this with a series of the most delicate touches imaginable. But it was reserved for her portrayal of Doña Sol and of Zaïre to display the secret at once of her weakness and of her strength. In both *Hernani* and in Voltaire's tragedy she alternates an almost listless indifference with splendid and irresistible outbursts of passion.

In Victor Hugo's fine though too wordy drama she is quiescent in three acts out of five—that the volcano of passionate love may gain strength for its periodical eruption. Though in these rôles we cannot very well test the actress's command of that highest of all histrionic power which is equally sustained from first to last, there yet seems sufficient evidence to show that, if she frequently rises distinctly above any of her female contemporaries upon the stage, she constantly fails, either from caprice or from a faulty conception of art, or from a desire to spare as much as may be her fragile physique, to do full justice to herself. But discover what spots we may on the face, we cannot refuse to acknowledge its brilliance; and it is not too much to say that the musical passion, the tender beauty, and the intense feeling with which Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt treats an episode such as the suicide of Doña Sol on her wedding-night, afford one of the keenest and richest treats ever offered by the acted drama.

Passing on to other plays we are struck by the comparative flatness with which the earlier works of Alexandre Dumas fils, *Le Demi-Monde*, produced in 1855, and *Le Fils Naturel*, dating from 1858, have fallen upon their hearers. On the other hand, some of the most enjoyable evenings have been spent with M. Augier and *Le Gendre de M. Poirier*, in which M. Got, as Poirier, appears at his very best; with MM. Erckmann-Chatrian and *L'Ami Fritz*, where M. Febvre secures his chief triumph; and with Madame de Girardin and her exquisite little domestic poem, *La Joie fait Peur*. In one way or another these pieces and these impersonations were comparatively familiar, it is true; but it was not lack of previous acquaintance with them that prevented any warm appreciation of the didactic speeches and unsympathetic stories with which M. Dumas deals with painful social problems. Georges Sand's agreeable, if not very dramatic comedy, *Le Marquis de Villemer*, gave an excellent example of the polished, all-round acting of the company, as did also the Mdlle. de Belle Isle of the elder Dumas; in both of which plays M. Delaunay justified his popular reputation, and Mdlle. Broisat, an *ingénue* of a most interesting type, made good her claim to notice from those who had scarcely known her name before. The name of M. Coquelin must not be omitted from any list which professes to give the names of the artists who have specially distinguished themselves; his humour in *Les Precieuses Ridicules*, his unforced pathos in *Le Luthier de Cremona*, and his high comedy in *Les Fourchambault*, prove him second only to M. Got in versatility. For the rest, Mdlle. Croizette has sadly disappointed expectation, for she has exhibited neither the perfected art nor the natural charm to be expected from an actress in her position. Even her famous impersonation of Blanche de Chelles in *Le Sphinx* was thoroughly commonplace, and she could not touch such a character as that of the heroine of de Musset's *Les Caprices de Marianne*. M. Mounet-Sully again, impressive tragedian though he is, scarcely shows in his vigorous declamation the evidence of intelligent training which we might have looked for; but his magnificent physical realisation of the robber chief, Hernani, and of the

Eastern potentate, Orosmane, atones for many shortcomings. Any comparison, however, of his delineation of semi-barbaric jealousy with Salvini's seems to us as impossible as a parallel between *Othello* and *Zaire*. M. Worms, as Don Carlos in *Hernani*, showed himself a painstaking actor, not devoid of calm dignity, though in other rôles in which he succeeds M. Delaunay he is lacking in sympathy and a variety of tone. Madame Brohan has introduced us in *Le Marquise de Villemer* to one of the most delightful studies of proud yet gentle old-ladyhood that we recollect; and Mdlle. Samary, the youngest of the *sociétaires*, was full of promise and charm in all that she attempted. It will be time when, next month, the series of performances is over to proceed from the particular to the general, and to deduce from a retrospect of the season the chief causes which have led to its unprecedented success.

THE series of revivals which Mr. Irving is now proceeding with at the Lyceum Theatre is well worth the attention of those who know or care anything about the present condition of the drama in this country. Side by side with the performances of the most perfectly organized and the most richly endowed dramatic company in the world, we have the opportunity of witnessing the results of some eight or nine years' labour on the part of a single actor to revive, not the interest of a select circle of *dilettanti*, but the practical sympathy of the general public of this country in the higher forms of the drama. First, as the employé of a most shrewd and able manager, next as the virtual partner in management, lastly as sole and autocratic manager himself, Mr. Irving has had the opportunity of working in the service of an art which he loves, and for an end which from the commencement of his career, among countless discouragements and spite of frequent disappointments, he has always kept in view; with what result may be seen by any one who will take the trouble to visit the varied series of performances now being given at the Lyceum Theatre. We cannot help thinking that a fair comparison of the services rendered to art by Mr. Irving and by the Comédie Française will not be unfavourable to the former, and will reassure those lovers of the drama in England whom the visit of our talented guests may have somewhat disconcerted.

No comparison, be it remembered, can be fair which does not honestly take into consideration the difficulties which any English actor or manager has in achieving such results as Mr. Irving has achieved. Here let us say at once that we recognise most heartily and most fully the excellent work which has been accomplished by other actors and managers within our own recollection. The names of Phelps, Charles Kean, Fechter, Bancroft, Hare, among actor-managers will always be honoured for their consistent and successful efforts to serve the highest interests of the drama in England. Nor have the actresses been behindhand in this respect: the Prince of Wales's owes more perhaps to Marie Wilton than even to Marie Bancroft; while the long and intermittent struggle, in which Miss Litton has been engaged at the Aquarium Theatre to make the old comedies once more popular, has at last been crowned with success. There are many other instances which may easily be

recalled of good work done by actors or actresses in management ; but we may well take Mr. Irving's achievements at the Lyceum as a type of what may be accomplished by talent and energy combined for the drama, even under all the disadvantages which are inseparable from such an enterprise in this country.

Let us glance at some of the advantages which such a corporation, for that is what it really is, as the Comédie Française possesses. First, there is the *prestige* of antiquity, an almost unbroken succession of representations from the time of their great founder, with all the valuable traditions accruing therefrom, vividly and accurately preserved. The endowment from the State may not seem a large sum to an English manager ; but what stability, and at the same time what elasticity, does not the possession of a fixed income give to an artistic enterprise ? The company proper, *i.e.*, the *sociétaires*, have a direct interest in the prosperity of their theatre ; the pensionnaires have a very fair hope to obtain such. The numbers and the individual merits of the actors render it an easy matter to cast any piece in their *répertoire* most completely. The training and instruction, direct and indirect, which the younger members of the company obtain, are invaluable aids to their artistic progress. The English actor-manager does not possess one of these advantages. He can seldom afford to engage a sufficient number of trained artists to represent all the parts of a play effectively, he has to train many at rehearsal as best he can. Meanwhile not only has he his own part to study, but all the details of the production, both those that relate to money and those that relate to art, to arrange and supervise. In Mr. Irving's case he has to act not only every night, but, in order to recoup himself for his heavy weekly expenses and the enormous outlay of capital entailed in the putting on the stage artistically of so many pieces, he has also to act twice in the daytime. Well may some of his French *confrères* in art express their astonishment that any artist can sustain the labour and anxiety of such an undertaking, and yet be able to act with such fire and such finish as Mr. Irving does. Any one who goes to see the seven plays announced for representation during this month must admit, however strong his sentiments or his prejudices against Mr. Irving's acting may be, that they are produced with the greatest care, and with something very like perfection as regards all the accessories. Mr. Irving is fortunate enough to possess most zealous and efficient coadjutors, but the chief credit of such a result cannot be denied to him. The patience and intelligence which Mr. Irving brings to bear on every detail in the rehearsals, thinking nothing too trivial for the exercise of care, taking as much pains with the supernumeraries as with the principal actors, are manifest in that general completeness and dramatic effectiveness of the representations, which are recognised by all the spectators, but the cause of which is only known to a few.

A few words as to the Lyceum performances. Surely the most prejudiced person must admit that to sway the feelings of an audience in such various rôles as Hamlet, Louis XI., Eugene Aram, Charles I., Richelieu, Mathias, and the double part in the *Lyons Mail*, a man must possess something more than a few mannerisms

and much earnestness. If such a series of performances as Mr. Irving gives in these rôles does not entitle a man to be called a great actor, we do not know what does. Let some of Mr. Irving's detractors go any night and watch, not the actor, but the faces of the audience ; and they will begin to think that "after all there is something in the man," and that this something amounts to genius. In Miss Ellen Terry Mr. Irving has a most powerful and sympathetic coadjutor. None of the pieces in which she appears, except the *Lady of Lyons* perhaps, have been written with a view to give the actress a "great part," but as Ruth Meadows, in *Eugene Aram*, Miss Terry has added another most charming and pathetic impersonation to her répertoire, while as Queen Henrietta, in *Charles I.*, we doubt not, by the time this is printed, she will have achieved a new triumph. Mr. Irving has happily found in Miss Alma Murray a very pleasing representative of such parts as Julie in *Richelieu* ; she is a young actress who has not belied the promise which her earlier performances in London afforded, and who is clever and modest enough to avail herself of the opportunities she now has of advancing in her art. Of Mr. Irving's company generally it is not necessary to speak ; the principal members of it have repeatedly given proof of their efficiency and of the loyal spirit of co-operation which animates them. That Mr. Irving's management "may live long and prosper" is a wish to which all lovers of dramatic art in England must heartily subscribe.

At our two Opera Houses the programmes have consisted almost entirely of repetitions of familiar works. The only novelties have been those offered at the Royal Italian Opera. *Les Amants de Vérone*, produced at Covent Garden, May 24th, is the work of a noble amateur, the Marquis D'Ivry, who has not only composed the music, but provided the libretto of this operatic adaptation of Shakspeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. His verses are not highly meritorious, but he is to be commended for the fidelity with which he has adhered to the original play. Of course an Italian version was used at Covent Garden, and this was in point of literary merit even less commendable than the French original, while the accompanying English translation was absolutely ludicrous. The music seldom reached the mild level of mediocrity, but was almost uniformly weak, commonplace, and unsympathetic. The best part of it was the orchestration, and this was not remarkably good. An attractive Juliet was found in Mdle. Heilbron. The Romeo was M. Capoul, who exerted himself zealously and supplied an extra number of the painful grimaces and bodily contortions by which he is supposed to indicate the influence of the tender passion. The other characters were creditably sustained, but the opera was hopeless. It did not irritate the audience, but it bored them. Even the duel scene, which in Paris created a "sensation," and earned for the opera what was satirically described as a "succès d'escrime," provoked ironical laughter at Covent Garden,—the gallant Romeo and the fiery Tybalt were so evidently anxious to avoid hurting each other. Apart from the eternal interest of the story, there is nothing in *Les Amants de Vérone* to shield it from rapid consignment to oblivion. *Norma*, which had not been heard at Covent

Garden for three or four years previously, was produced there on the 16th ult. with Madame Cepeda in the title character. The Spanish prima donna fully satisfied all the dramatic requirements of the rôle, and was equally successful in declamatory and pathetic passages. Mdlle. Valleria was an excellent Adalgisa, Signori Sylva and Silvestri were the weakest and least satisfactory Pollio and Oroveso we remember to have ever beheld. Madame Adelina Patti has delighted crowded audiences by repetitions of familiar triumphs, and has also startled the public by assuming, "for the first time on any stage," the character of Selika, in Meyerbeer's posthumous opera, *L'Africaine*. On the first night she was not only suffering from the effects of indisposition, but was very nervous; and although she sang and acted in admirable style, her success was comparatively slight. The musical public are accustomed to expect something marvellous, if not impossible, whenever Madame Patti undertakes a new character, and were surprised to find that she made no attempt to improve the score of Meyerbeer, but devoted herself to the development of the ideas suggested by the composer's score. A week later, at her second appearance as Selika, she was in fuller possession of her splendid vocal powers and of her self-reliance, and her success was much beyond that which she had previously achieved. Still, the character of Selika, originally intended by Meyerbeer for a mezzo-soprano, is not calculated to display to advantage the most attractive qualities of Madame Adelina Patti. M. Lassalle, of the Grand Opera, Paris, made a brilliant success in the rôle of Nelusko. He has a splendid baritone voice, and knows how to use it. His vocalisation is of the most finished kind, and there is in his style so much vigour and manliness, combined with delicacy and pathos when necessary, that he at once attracts sympathy. He is accepted in France as the rightful successor of M. Faure, and English musicians are willing to concur in paying him this compliment, particularly as he possesses a far finer voice than M. Faure could ever boast. Mdlle. Valleria has become a favourite at the Royal Italian Opera. Mdlle. Pasqua has not maintained her position. Mdlle. Thalberg has been highly successful on several occasions, and Mdlle. Turolla steadily improves. Mdlle. Rosine Bloch, of the Grand Opera, Paris, has appeared at Covent Garden as Senora in *La Favorita*, and Fides, in *La Prophète*. In the former rôle she was but partially successful, her voice exhibiting signs of wear-and-tear, which were prejudicial to the effect of her singing. In the character of Fides she achieved a genuine and great success. Her vocal means were sufficient for the occasion, and her acting was superb.

At Her Majesty's Opera the only addition made to the repertory has been Verdi's *Aïda*, produced June 19. Miss Clara Louise Kellogg, as Aïda, acted gracefully and often powerfully, but her voice appears to have lost half its power since she sang in London ten years ago. Madame Trebelli was an admirable Amneris; Signor Campanini a throaty and inclegant Radames. The other rôles were satisfactorily filled, and the *mise-en-scène* was magnificent. Madames Christine Nilsson and Etelka Gerster have repeated several of their most popular impersonations, and Mdlle. Tremelli made a brilliant *reentrée* in the unpromising rôle of Ortruda,

in *Lohengrin*. Miss Minnie Hauk's impersonation of Carmen has become more fascinating than ever, and Bizet's romantic opera has drawn large houses. M. Rondil, a French baritone, possessing remarkable vocal and dramatic abilities, has made distinguished successes, and has already become an attraction.

Born Mr. Charles Reade and Mr. Charles Warner are to be heartily congratulated upon the excellent use which they have made of the not very promising materials afforded to them by the repulsive play founded upon *L'Assommoir*. The adapter, who has very judiciously avoided any effort to anglicise the characters, has nevertheless contrived to soften down much that would be unpalatable to British taste, and has done so without sensibly weakening the dramatic motive. His dialogue is as strong and simple as ever, and he has written a play which, acted as it is, will long retain its firm hold over the public at the Princess's. The means which he takes to elevate the character of the much-suffering heroine are ingenious, though it must be confessed that his manipulation of the plot and the chief characters robs the terrible tale of much of the unvarnished realism from which it derives its fame. Mr. Warner's share in the popularity of the production is at least as prominent as that of the adapter. If no other English dramatist could so well have fitted *L'Assommoir* for our stage, no other of our actors except Mr. Irving could have dealt so effectively with that fearful death-struggle in the garret which is already the talk of London. That this tremendously powerful portrayal of hideous mental disease reaches the loftiest standard of dramatic art we do not for a moment infer; there is a lack of dignity in the whole subject, and a craving after morbid realism which should but rarely be gratified. But, granting that the task has to be undertaken, Mr. Warner must be pronounced to have accomplished it almost faultlessly. Every loathsome detail is perfectly studied and yet never over-emphasized; the strain upon physical and mental endurance is always met without a suggestion of effort; the horror of the scene is painted in the strongest colours, while it is drawn with a hand that never falters in its fidelity to nature. The performance, which gains greatly in effect from its contrast to the actor's cheery illustrations of the artizan's happy life while he keeps his pledge, raises Mr. Warner at a bound to a place in his profession amply justified by his years of conscientious labour, and we can only trust that the appreciation which he so well deserves will not blind him to the fact that there are nobler studies than the delirium tremens of a Coupeau to enter upon. *Drink* is acted well by a company well-selected for its task, as Miss Roselle gives genuine pathos to the grief of Gervaise, and Mr. W. Rignold and Mr. Redmund are excellent as the very good and the very bad man respectively.

For the close of Miss Neilson's Adelphi engagement *Amy Robsart* has been revived with much care and great success. Miss Neilson, whose delineation of Sir Walter Scott's heroine has gained greatly in dramatic force, has been ably supported by Mr. H. Vezin, Mr. Neville, and Miss Pateman. Revivals have also been the order of the day at the Prince of Wales's, where Mr. W. S.

Gilbert's ever fresh *Sweethearts* has been presented once more with Mrs. Bancroft as winsome Jenny Northcote and Mr. Bancroft loyally doing his best in the scarcely suitable part of Henry Spreadbrow, formerly played by Mr. Coghlan. *Good for Nothing* is also disinterred in order that Mrs. Bancroft may resume the rôle of Nan, which she does with wonderful *naïveté* and drollery.

A NEW Falstaff of much promise was introduced at the Gaiety, in Mr. Arthur Sketchley, who obviously only needs familiarity with the resources of the actor in order to convey the spirit of the dear old fat knight's rich humour as it has never of late years been suggested on the stage. To Mr. Henry Marston, a sterling actor of the older school, whose able and thorough work never gained the substantial reward which it merited, a farewell benefit has been generously given at the Lyceum by permission of Mr. Irving, and the interesting performance resulted in a worthy contribution to a worthy cause. Mr. Wills has brought out a new version of *Ellen* under the title of *Brag*, but it did not succeed.

ONE of the few new productions of the month was a melodrama called *The Mother*, by Mr. Frank Harvey, and played for three weeks by the Beatrice Company at the Olympic. It deals with the supposed commission by the heroine of the crime of infanticide, and is full of the stagey incident which lends itself well to the dramatic illustration beloved at the theatres of the East-end. As is usual with plays of its kind the plot rather lacks concentration, and occasionally defies probability; but its series of effects, albeit conventional, is decidedly to the purpose. The interpretation of *The Mother* was remarkable chiefly for Miss Ernstone's earnest emotional acting as the heroine, but Mr. Harvey, Mr. J. H. Barnes, and Mr. Carter-Edwards all gave useful and suitable assistance.

IN THE PROVINCES.

IN the course of the month Mr. Toole fulfilled a series of engagements in the north of England, one being at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester. Temporarily released from his engagement at the Gaiety by the arrival of the Comédie Française, Mr. Terry went on a provincial tour, and on the 2nd appeared at Birmingham. Thence he went to Sheffield and Liverpool. He was preceded in Birmingham by Miss Bateman, whose *Leah* was spoken of by the *Daily Post* as having many claims to be regarded as one of the great works of modern histrionic art, as having lost none of its original interest and power. Miss Bateman subsequently appeared at Leeds and Liverpool. Miss Swanborough and Mr. Vernon continued their tour, and, whether in *Mammon* or the *Snowball*, seemed to have chained success to their car. Miss Heath fulfilled a short engagement at Manchester in *Jane Shore*, and the pathos of Miss Jenny Lee's *Jo* was recognised at Liverpool and elsewhere. The *Truth* company attracted large audiences wherever they went—an announcement which will cause no surprise. Mr. Mayo, the American actor, won the suffrages of Liverpool playgoers in *Davy*

Crockett, with which he there opened his English campaign on the 9th. Amongst others on tour are Mr. Dillon, Miss Soldene, and Mr. Eldred. The *Cloches de Cornuville* company went far north, appearing in the middle of the month at Greenock. The *Advertiser* of that town thought that Mr. Fernandez' *Gasparil* was too robust, but that the performance on the whole was worthy of his reputation.

IN PARIS.

From a theatrical point of view the French capital is now in a state of stagnation. Three or four houses are closed, and this, joined to the absence of the Comédie Française, leaves us little in the way of the most ancient of all entertainments still in favour. *Le Panache*, the little comedy in which M. Gondinet happily ridicules the French passion for official position, was lately revived at the Palais Royal. It did not meet with much success, although M. Geoffroy's Ponterisson, as before, was intensely amusing throughout. The favour with which the piece met on its first production was due in a large measure to the applicability of its satire to current events, now almost forgotten. *Le Panache* gave place soon afterwards to *Les Locataires de M. Blondeau*, a vaudeville by M. Chivot. Here we have a comic imbroglio of a kind very well known on the Paris stage, and as M. Montbars and M. Lhéritier are provided with rather effective rôles the piece seems likely to break the spell of ill-fortune which has so long hung over the theatre. Revivals are the order of the day at most of the other houses in need of a change. *Les Mystères de Paris* is to be seen at the Porte Saint Martin, *Nôtre Dame de Paris* at the Théâtre des Nations, and *La Comtesse Roman* at the Gymnase. M. Lacrosonnière's acting as Quasimodo is exceedingly vivid, and has a welcome foil in the brightness of Mdle. Lody's Esmeralda. Just before their departure the Comédie Française played *L'Avare* in order that M. Got might appear as Harpagon, a character hitherto associated with the name of Talbot. The *doyen* acted in the true Molièrian spirit, and in the scene relating to the casket did justice to himself. M. Delaunay, as Cléanthe, looks as young as in *La Joie Fait Peur*.

IN BERLIN.

THE Royal Playhouse brought its season to an end on the 14th of June with a performance of *Die zärtlichen Verwandten* of Benedix. Reserving for a future occasion our review of the past season, we will now record some of the more prominent features of its last month, which was not marked by the production of any novelty. The event of the month was the *Gastspiel* of Fräulein Clara Ziegler, the celebrated tragic actress of the Munich Court Theatre, who first appeared in Berlin in the year 1870, and has since been a frequent and ever-welcome visitor. She opened her present engagement as Medea, and appeared on subsequent evenings as Johanna in Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans*, and as Antigone in the great tragedy of Sophocles. The two latter performances took place on

the large stage of the Opera House, which is always used for the purpose of plays requiring a grandiose *mise-en-scène*, and there is something in Fräulein Ziegler's peculiar singing delivery that reminds one of operatic recitative. The guest drew large houses and retains much of her old influence over an audience, though the *irréparable outrage* of years has somewhat impaired her powers, and has in particular bereft her voice of some of its brilliancy, the upper tones having now a slight tendency to shrillness. Her statuesque figure, however, remains, and she wears the costume of Antigone with stately grace, in which few can vie with her. The regular members of the company lent valuable support to the guest in the old Greek tragedy, Fräulein Meyer as Ismene, Herr Berndal as Creon, and Herr Ludwig as Haemon, being especially deserving of praise. The performance produced a deep impression. Fräulein Ziegler, in addition to the well-known characters we have named, played for the first time in Berlin the part of Thusnelda in Friedrich Halm's tragedy, *Der Fechter von Ravenna*, which was first produced in 1854 and has been absent from the stage of the Royal Playhouse for several years. The actress failed to realize the character of the heroic German mother, who stabs her son Thumelicus to death rather than allow him to appear in the Roman arena as a gladiator. Herr Urban played the part of the son with great effect, and Herr Klein's Caligula gained much applause.

A FEW words in fulfilment of our promise to revert to the new comic opera of Herr Max Wolf, successfully produced at the Friedrich Wilhelmstadt Theatre at the beginning of May. *Cesarine*, as it is entitled, has a much better libretto than the same composer's *Portraitdame*, and the music has all that grace and brightness which rendered Herr Max Wolf's first work so popular. The action takes place in the days of the war between France and Spain in the reign of Louis XIII. Cesarine, the daughter of a wealthy horticulturist, is beloved by two officers in the French Army, and the unsuccessful suitor is in the end consoled by gaining the affection of her younger sister. The performance of the new opera was highly creditable to the company; Fräulein Stubel in the title part, and Herren Swoboda and Wilke as the lovers, being especially good, both from a musical and from a histrionic point of view. Another comic opera was produced at the same house early in May, entitled *Die Letzten Mohicaner*. The ill-constructed libretto by Herr Zell sealed the ill-fate of the work, though Herr Genée's score contained some pleasing music.

IN VIENNA.

THE success of Victor Hugo's *Hernani* on its third revival at the Théâtre Français naturally directed the attention of foreign theatre managers to the work, and a German version of it was produced at the Burgtheater at the end of May. Unhappily the leading theatre of Vienna, powerful as its present company is, does not possess a Sarah Bernhardt, and the performance of the tragedy was not such as to exhibit the merits of the drama in their best light, while its defects were rendered very evident. Frau Wolter, the principal

tragic actress of the company, was not considered sufficiently juvenile for the part of Doña Sol, it being perhaps forgotten that Mlle. Mars had passed her fiftieth year when she created the character. The rôle was on this occasion allotted to Frau Janisch, who is a very graceful and pleasing actress, but her strength is unequal to the demands of the last act. The combined youth and tragic power of Fräulein Wessely would seem to us to fit her above all other members of the Burgtheater for such parts as Doña Sol, but that young actress had perhaps too recently joined the company to be entrusted with the main responsibility in an important play, upon which probably great expectations were founded. We do not, however, think that *Hernani* will retain a place on these boards. In no respect was the performance equal to that of the Comédie Française. If M. Mounet Sully is an over-vehement representative of *Hernani*, he is moderate in comparison with Herr Krastel, who rantted himself hoarse before the play was half over. Herr Robert deprived Don Carlos of the little dignity Victor Hugo has left him, and Herr Hallenstein did not make much of the part of Ruy Gomez. No other novelty was produced during the past month, the programmes being made up of pieces belonging to the copious repertory of the house. We hear that M. Sarcy, in delivering a lecture recently at a London theatre on the Comédie Française, dwelt much upon the fulness of the *répertoire* of that famous company, and went so far as to say that the Comédie Française was unique in that respect, and that no other theatre in the world possessed anything deserving of the name of *répertoire*. If there were any Germans amongst the brilliant lecturer's audience they must have been astounded at such a proposition. Every subsidized theatre of Germany has a vast repertory, and the Burgtheater of Vienna, if it yields to the leading Paris theatre in some respects, surpasses that house in the variety of its performances; since the opening of the present season on the 1st of September it has performed no fewer than 110 pieces, a number exceeding that of the whole *répertoire* of the Comédie Française. Before taking leave of the Burgtheater we may state that Herr Hartmann has just been appointed one of the "régisseurs" of the house, an office similar to that of the *semainiers* of the Théâtre Française. The other régisseurs are Herren La Roche, Sonnenthal, Lewinsky, and Gabillon. Herr Hartmann joined the company some fifteen years ago, and slowly made his way to the front rank. His brilliant performances in the series of Shakspeare's historical plays brought him very prominently forward, and established his reputation.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IN Milan, the Carrier-Rey Company closed their season at the Manzoni Theatre towards the end of May with a performance of *Niniche*, which was one of the greatest successes of the season. The French company was succeeded by a Piedmontese troupe under the direction of the celebrated Toselli, one of the ablest and most

versatile actors of the present day. Toselli is well known to Milan and attracted large audiences on many a former visit, but on this occasion he has to act to half-empty houses. It is not easy to explain the indifference of the public, who flocked in crowds to hear *Le Petit Duc* and *Niniche*, and who cannot be deterred by their ignorance of the Piedmontese dialect, for it does not differ much from the Milanese dialect, the principal difference being in the accent, to which the ear soon becomes accustomed. The Toselli company opened their season with *Le Miserie di Monsù Travet* of Bersezio, the masterpiece of the Piedmontese Theatre. Two new comedies from the same pen have since been produced, *La Protesion* and *Casa Minuti*, which abound in those truthful sketches of family life in which Bersezio excels. At the end of their season at the Manzoni Theatre, the dramatic forces of the Carrier-Rey Company, dissatisfied on account of the undue prominence which had been given to opera bouffe during the season, seceded from the company and began a series of performances at the Teatro Milanese.

In Rome, the Lavaggi company were tempted by the success of their production of the *Pseudolus* of Plautus at the Valle Theatre to make another attempt in the field of ancient comedy. The *Pluto* of Aristophanes, translated with an excessive freedom which prevented it from interesting the educated public, failed to satisfy anyone; and indeed the management did not give the old Greek comedy a fair chance, for the piece had been so imperfectly rehearsed that the prompter's voice was audible throughout the whole performance. The opera season at the Politeama continues with varying success. *Lucia di Lammermoor* was given at the end of May with a very feeble cast, and was ill-received by an audience whom over-familiarity with the score has rendered critical. The equally familiar *Forza del Destino* was subsequently given with success, the cast being greatly superior.

IN MADRID.

ONCE more a new work from the pen of Don José Echegaray forms the most striking feature of the month. The French stage possesses many comic monologues, such as *Un Monsieur en habit noir*, *Madame attend Monsieur*, *Toto chez Tata*, &c., but *Bodas trágicas* (A Tragic Wedding), as Don José Echegaray's new work is called, is the first instance we know of a tragic theme being dealt with in the form of a monologue. Its subject may be briefly stated. Doña Maria passionately returns the love of Don Luis, who proposes marriage to her, but he proves inconstant and marries another woman, forgetful of the vows interchanged with Maria. His faithlessness does not extinguish her love, but, on the contrary, increases her passion. On the evening of his wedding-day she repairs to a house facing his dwelling and separated from it by such a narrow street that access can be had from the balcony of the one house to that of the other. From her window Doña Maria contemplates her rival's joy till wrath and jealousy drive her

wild; then wrapt up in a cloak which conceals her features and prevents Don Luis from recognising her, she asks him for his dagger and plunges it into her heart, whereupon he leaps from his balcony into her room in time to receive the last words of the victim of his inconstancy. This monologue, which is written in sonorous verse, was very effectively delivered by Señora Carolina Civilí.

As the temperature rises the importance of the new productions at the theatres diminishes, and the recent novelties at the Teatro de la Comedia are not such as to call for much notice. *Illovido del Cielo* (Rained from Heaven), a two-act comedy by Don Vital Aza, has reference to an uncle who comes back from California with a large fortune, and desiring to assist his nephew without disclosing his identity, confers his favours upon the wrong person, mistaking for his nephew a poor artist of the same name. When the mistake is discovered, the uncle declares himself to be rich enough to help his nephew without discarding the artist who had found such an unexpected demand for his long-neglected pictures. It will be seen that there is not much point in the piece, but some of the incidental characters are well drawn, and had the advantage of being acted by Señora Valverde, Señor Mario and other clever artistes. At the Teatro de la Alhambra, a very good company have been performing the principal works of Lecocq and Offenbach with less success than they achieved last season. Hervé's *La Belle Poule*, produced under the title of *Gallo e Gallina*, attracted better houses on account of its novelty.

IN NEW YORK.

As was briefly announced last month, Mr. Daly's version of *L'Assommoir* has not succeeded here. It was deemed repulsive; and although the delirium tremens scene was represented with great power by Mr. Meredith, and the wash-house scene excited some enthusiasm, the house was closed on the 17th May. *The Snowball*, produced at Wallacks' has, on the other hand, been very successful, thanks to its own merits and the acting of Mr. Coghlan and his sister as Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone. The regular season, however, ended soon afterwards, upon which Miss Ada Cavendish commenced an engagement there as Rosalind. The Rice party opened the summer season at the Union Square Theatre. The times do not seem to be very propitious in regard to theatrical enterprise; Mr. Boucicault, although surrounded by a clever company, is not drawing large audiences to the Grand Opera House by *Arrah-na-Pogue*, and even Mdlle. Aimée has been playing to rather scanty audiences. Both the Grand Opera House and the Park Theatre are now closed.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

AN American manager has come to London in the hope of inducing Mr. Irving to undertake an engagement at Booth's Theatre next autumn. It is proposed that during his absence Madame Modjeska should appear at the Lyceum.

MR. IRVING has been elected permanent Governor of the Council of the Shakspeare Memorial Association, and has given £100 to the endowment fund of a dramatic library at Stratford-on-Avon.

MADAME PATTI lately made arrangements to appear in Paris next autumn, but the Marquis de Caux has obtained an order against her appearance there.

M. GOUNOD is engaged upon a new opera, *Héloïse et Abélard*. Though the composer was educated for the priesthood, this work deals in a sympathetic spirit with the intellectual uprising of the thirteenth century against the pretensions and dogmas of the Church.

MISS ELLEN TERRY's benefit is fixed for the 9th July.

M. REGNIER will be Directeur-Général des Études at the Opéra, under M. Vaucorbeil.

MADAME MARIE ROZE and her husband are on their way home from the West, and are expected to arrive early in the month.

MR. WARNER's success in *Drink* has been promptly and substantially recognised at the theatre. His salary has been doubled, and his engagement extended for three years.

MR. AND MRS. SCOTT-SIDDONS are in London.

M. THIERS was asked in 1872 to allow the Comédie Française to visit London, but resolutely set his face against the idea. "Si cette demande," he angrily said, "m'est encore faite, je supprime la subvention du Théâtre Français."

THE Sociétaires left Paris on the morning of the 31st May, a good deal of excitement prevailing at the station. Mdlle. Bernhardt looked very miserable, and in reply to a friend said it was because she could not perform the journey in a balloon.

MR. MOY THOMAS travelled with the company from Folkestone to London, and soon afterwards gave a *résumé* in the *Daily News* of a conversation he had with M. Got and M. Sarcey. Thereat the Editor of *Truth* was both surprised and grieved. This interviewing, he said in effect, was altogether unworthy of such a writer as Mr. Thomas and such a paper as the *Daily News*. Be that as it may, the editor of *Truth*

is fairly entitled to be heard on the point. In both theory and practice he has always manifested an intense regard for the dignity of journalism. His pages are never soiled with personal details, offensive or inoffensive. Interviewing is a custom against which he resolutely sets his face,—unless he can be the first in the field.

THE arrival of the Sociétaires was awaited at Charing Cross by a larger crowd than had been expected. Poor Mdlle. Dudley was dreadfully ill; indeed, said something about settling permanently in England rather than re-cross the Channel. Mdlle. Bernhardt, of course, was as well as could be; and lively Mdlle. Samary, though “bien fain,” was in the highest spirits.

BEHIND the scenes at the Comédie Française it is customary for gentlemen to remove their hats. The week before last the Prince of Wales went to the back of the Gaiety Theatre to be introduced to Mdlle. Bernhardt, and, owing to the draught, did not observe the French custom. “Monseigneur,” said the actress, after a pause, “on n’ôte pas sa couronne, mais on ôte son chapeau.”

THE company were entertained at a *déjeuner* in the Mansion House by the Lord Mayor on the 16th June. The ladies generally wore dresses of a sombre hue. Mdlle. Madeleine Brohan was on the right of the Lord Mayor, and M. Perrin next to the Lady Mayoress. The administrator replied to the toast of the Comédie Française, the Lord Mayor’s health being proposed in English by M. Got. The *déjeuner* over, the Lady Mayoress had a long conversation with Mdlle. Croizette. The beauty of Mdlle. Baretta, we are told, was “fort remarquée par le lord-maire.” English art was represented on the occasion, among others, by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Miss Neilson, Mr. Neville, Mr. Vezin, Mr. Warner and Mr. Wyndham. The *Figaro* says that the company included “Mme. Kendel, Mme. Bankroff, Miss Neville, M. Vesin, M. Windham.”

IN our biographical sketch of Mdlle. Bernhardt we omitted to state that in the war of 1870–71 she organized an ambulance. Madame Marie Rose, having rendered her some assistance, received the following note:—“Ambulance of the Odéon Theatre.—Dear Charming Artiste, in the name of my wounded, a thousand thanks. If ever you have need of me, count on my true gratitude. Your admirer, SARAH BERNHARDT.”

THERE is a charming portrait of Mdlle. Bernhardt in the Salon this year. The actress, seated, is looking at a gold statuette of Apollo, her head being turned to her right. In style and treatment it recalls to mind the last work of Mr. Millais. The artist is M. Baslieu-Lepage, who has presented the portrait to the original.

THE largest oil-painting in the Bernhardt Gallery, representing a Spanish girl selling palm-branches, has been purchased by Prince Leopold.

THERE was a very pleasant gathering the other night at the Rue Royale Club in Paris. A little comedy by the Marquis le Massa, *Le Club des*

Femmes, was played by Mdlle. Barlet, Mdlle. Montalaud, Mdlle. Legault, Mdlle. Kelb, and others. In the prologue, spoken by Mdlle. Barlet, we find these lines :—

Une femme au Club ! Est-ce un rêve
Ou quel destin inattendu ?
Mais je suis, Messieurs, fille d'Eve
Et j'aime le fruit défendu.

This club, by the way, is a favourite resort of the Prince of Wales.

M. TURQUET, Under-Secretary of State for the Fine Arts, recently announced his intention to put down immorality on the stage. Now, on the nomination of this functionary, M. Hennequin, the author of the *Dominos Roses* and *Nonnon*, has been made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour ! Excellent beginning, truly.

IN a restaurant attached to a theatre in Pesth the following notice may be seen :—" Gentlemen are respectfully requested to abstain from kissing the waitresses on the stairs, as it is a fruitful cause of breakage and impedes the service."

MR. SOTHERN, with his guests, the Duke of Beaufort and Sir John Reid, has arrived on Decoration Day. The Lambs' Club and a large number of friends had arranged to go down the bay to receive him, but he cut off all such proceedings by telegraphing that it was his desire to pass quietly through New York to his salmon river, on the coast of Labrador. He invited all his friends to join him there any time after June 3 and up to July 10. It takes about seven days from Quebec, by light-draught schooner, to reach his river, provided the breezes are favourable. The mosquito season is now at its height.

SIR PERCY SHELLEY, nephew of the poet, is building a private theatre near his family mansion in Tite Street, Chelsea. The new edifice, which adjoins the studios of Mr. A. Stuart Wortley and Signor Pellegrini, and is opposite the studio of Mr. Whistler, is nearly the size of the Strand Theatre. The old Manor House Theatre, in the King's Road, Chelsea, where Alfred Wigan made his first appearance, was removed in 1841.

THE complimentary benefit to Mrs. Swanborough, in commemoration of the twenty-first anniversary of the Swanborough management, was given at the Haymarket Theatre on June 19th. Mrs. Keeley delivered an address written by Mr. H. J. Byron for the occasion. It may be interesting to mention that the theatre was opened under the Swanborough management April 5th, 1858, when Miss Swanborough delivered an address written by Albert Smith.

MADAME PERRIN, wife of the director of the Comédie Française, died on the day of the appearance of the company at the Gaiety. She was a daughter of M. Fournier Verneuil, the distinguished author of the Restoration period.

MR. SKETCHLEY, it will be seen, lately played Falstaff at the Gaiety. It was Mr. Hollingshead who gave him the sack.

LA REVUE RÉALISTE informs its readers that the "chief pantomime writers in England are Messrs. Rice, Byron, and Gilbert."

THEY begged him to play a little. He seemed to feel bashful at first, but after a while began to play vigorously. "What power!" said a listener to the owner of the piano. "Yes," exclaimed the latter in alarm, "he seems to have considerable muscle; but he ought to know that this isn't a gymnasium."

ONE evening last month the editor of a commercially successful weekly paper was inveighing bitterly against one who had incurred his resentment. A more contemptible fellow, he said, had never breathed. "Gently" said one of the wittiest of our dramatists; "you forget yourself."

JONES, a supernumerary, has to enter from the right and say, "My lord, the carriage waits." Certain changes having to be made, the stage manager informs Jones he will have to enter from the left and say, "The carriage waits, my lord." "My G—d!" Jones exclaims, in pitiable accents; "more study!—more study!"

MR. WILLS is engaged upon a piece for the Adelphi theatre.

ON the 11th ult. *The Girls* was played for the fiftieth time.

MISS FOOTE is engaged for two years at the Adelphi.

THE *Comtesse Romani* is to be revived at the Gymnase.

M. GOUNOD'S new opera, *Le Tribut de Zamora*, is founded upon a legend of Spain under the domination of the Moors.

Les Contes d'Hoffmann is the title of a new comic opera by M. Offenbach.

IN February, 1880, Mr. Boucicault will begin his season at Booth's Theatre, and Miss Neilson, Miss Mary Anderson, Signor Salvini, Mr. Booth, and Mr. Jefferson, will appear there in succession.

THE *Girls* is to be played at Wallack's Theatre.

MR. MAX STRAKOSCH and Mr. Maurice Grau have taken the Fifth Avenue Theatre for next season.

MDLLE. HEILBRONN and M. Lassalle have been engaged by M. Vaucorbeil.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT, through undertaking to write letters from London to the *Gaulois* and another paper, has exposed herself to the resentment of the *Figaro*, which for several weeks has lost no opportunity of sneering at her. Even M. de Villemessant would have been above such petty spite as this.

ON the first night of the revival of *Ruy Blas*, after the first act, M. Victor Hugo went behind the scenes to congratulate Mdlle. Bernhardt. "I shall come back again soon," he said, as he prepared to return. "Je ne veux pas," said the actress, "que vous preniez cette peine; c'est à moi de me déranger." And between the fourth and fifth acts she crept into his box, there to receive the encouraging words which come with so great a charm from his lips, and which, as she has more than once found, enable her to surpass herself.

Literature.

THE 1603 EDITION OF HAMLET.*

MR. GRIGGS, formerly photo-lithographer to the India Office, is executing a series of Shakspeare quarto facsimiles under the superintendence of Mr. Furnivall, and it may be hoped that his courageous enterprise will receive the support it deserves. The value to the Shakspearean student of the First and Second Quartos of the poet's works can hardly be overrated, but down to the present time may have been placed beyond his reach, at least for purposes of immediate reference, by the large sum it has been found necessary to charge for a reproduction. Mr. Griggs' facsimiles may be obtained by subscribers for six shillings, and by non-subscribers for half-a-guinea. The process he adopts is in itself a guarantee of the fidelity of the copies; the owners of the choicest quartos extant have readily allowed them to be photographed, and a critical introduction to each play will be furnished by a member of the New Shakspeare Society. It is believed that from eight to twelve copies can be brought out every year until the list is exhausted. The series, rightly enough, is begun with the 1603 Quarto of *Hamlet*, as found in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire. "The forewords," as the introduction is headed, are from the pen of Mr. Furnivall, who maintains that the *Hamlet* alluded to by Nash and Henslowe and Lodge before 1602 was not by Shakspeare, that the date of the poet's first cast of *Hamlet* is 1601-2, and that the Quarto of 1603 was a piracy, not revised by an editor, and represents or misrepresents the work of Shakspeare only. The relation of the tragedy to *Der bestrafte Brüdermord* is also inquired into. Mr. Furnivall often assumes an amusingly dictatorial air. The student is told that he "will believe" this, and "more than doubt" that, a form of expression which is calculated to defeat its own object. It is to be wished, too, that Mr. Furnivall would condescend to write without affectation. But it must be explicitly said that by his marginal notes he has completely attained his end, which is to make the *fac-simile* "a *working* one for the Shakspearean student, and to show at a glance how much of the received text is in (and out of) the 1603 Quarto, and how its lines and scenes are occasionally transposed." No one who takes interest in *Hamlet* should be without one of these *fac-similes*.

* *Hamlet*. First Quarto, 1603, Facsimile. W. Griggs, Hanover Street, Peckham, S.E.

